



Forest Service celebrates Weeks Act



PHOTO BY MARY NOEL

From the Blue Ridge Parkway's Green Knob Overlook, drivers can view the Burke-McDowell Tract, the first land purchased for eastern national forests through the 1911 Weeks Act. Known as the Curtis Creek tract, the land is part of the Grandfather Ranger District of Pisgah National Forest.

A century of conservation: 1911-2011

by Mary Noel

Imagine if no national forests existed in North Carolina. This was reality in the early 20th century. Early national forests in the West were established from public lands by 1909. However, the U.S. government needed to purchase land from private landowners if national forests were to exist in the East.

With strong public support, the Weeks Act became law on March 1, 1911, under the leadership of Rep. John W. Weeks of Massachusetts. This law allowed for the purchase of the first national forest lands in the eastern United States.

The very first tract purchased for eastern national forests was 8,100 acres owned by the Burke McDowell Lumber Company, located near Marion. This land is now a part of the Grandfather District in Pisgah National Forest. Payment for the tract was made on Aug. 29, 1912, at



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOREST SERVICE

THE LANDS NOBODY WANTED: Most lands acquired in the early 1900's were stripped of trees and excessively eroded from farming.

a price of just over \$7 per acre. Later in 1916, George Vanderbilt sold an 86,000-acre tract to the government. Today this tract is the heart of the Pisgah District.

Nearly 30 percent of the first lands bought in North Carolina were high-quality forests with virgin timber, but many other tracts were stripped of trees. Smaller tracts were farmed out, resulting in erosion and a loss of topsoil.

Most acquired lands had never been surveyed, and the owners

often had only a general idea of the boundary locations. Many property boundaries overlapped, making acquisition a complicated process. This often required court condemnation in order to clear title for federal acquisition.

When this happened, all known adjacent landowners were notified of the proposed sale and given the opportunity to present to the court their ownership claims for the tract. The court paid those who appeared to have a valid claim to the tract,

which solidified ownership with one entity and allowed the government to buy the land without a cloud on the title.

Over the last 100 years, North Carolina has become home to the Nantahala, Pisgah, Uwharrie and Croatan national forests, which encompass more than 1.2 million acres — about 4 percent of North Carolina's land.

These North Carolina national forest lands now include:

- 11 congressionally designated wilderness areas.
- Three research experimental forests (Bent Creek, Coweeta and Blue Valley)
- Three National Wild and Scenic Rivers (Horsepasture and Chattooga Rivers and Wilson Creek)
- One National Historic Site (Cradle of Forestry in America)
- Two National Scenic Byways (Cherochala Skyway and Forest Heritage)
- Nationally designated trails: Appalachian Trail, Bartram Trail, Uwharrie National Scenic Trail, and Overmountain Victory Trail
- About 1,700 miles of trails: hike, bike, horse and off-highway vehicle.

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CROATAN ● UWHARRIE ● PISGAH ● NANTAHALA ● NATIONAL FORESTS



Hikers travel through Graveyard Fields in the Pisgah National Forest. PHOTO BY DON CRANE

Be safe in the national forests

North Carolina's national forests attract nearly eight million visitors a year. With advance preparation and precautions during your forest visit, you and your friends can have a more pleasant and safe outdoor experience.

Know...before you go

- A great outdoor experience starts with planning.
- Consider the risks involved with your chosen activity and know your skill level.
- Get a map and become familiar with the area you plan to visit. Maps are available at U.S. Forest Service offices listed on page 16 and online at www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc.
- Consult the internet, news media and other outlets for emerging safety concerns, such as wildfire, severe weather forecasts and current water levels.
- Always tell a friend or family member where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Leave unnecessary valuables at home.
- Make sure your equipment, food and clothing are appropriate for the trip. Be prepared for weather conditions that can change rapidly in mountainous terrain.
- If possible, don't go into the forest alone. In case of an accident or other emergency, it's much safer to be in pairs or a group.
- Carry identification with you.
- Know your group's skill limits and plan the trip to accommodate everyone.

- Remember that your cell phone, GPS unit or other electronic equipment may not work in remote areas.

- For the national forest area you are visiting, know which firearms are specifically restricted by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Visit www.wildlife.state.nc.us and select "regulations."

- In case you get stranded or injured, take extra food and water, warm clothing and a first-aid kit.

Stay safe in the woods

- Lock valuables in the trunk or other locations where they can't be seen.
- Check on-site information boards for safety issues relating specifically to that area.
- Identify potential natural hazards, such as high winds, slippery rocks, flash flooding, bears or other wild animals. Be alert!
- Keep your distance from all wild animals, and don't feed them.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave immediately and get help if necessary. Report suspicious individuals or illegal activity to law enforcement.
- Carry a noisemaker, such as a whistle.
- In the event of serious injury, wildfire or other emergencies, call 911.

For more information on outdoor safety, visit the National Forests in North Carolina website at www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc.

1911 Weeks law helps create Cradle of Forestry

by Cindy Carpenter

Grounded in historic landmarks with vision for the future, the Cradle of Forestry in America welcomes visitors from all ages to its unique interpretive center.

Nestled in the Pisgah Ranger District's Pink Beds valley near Brevard is the site of America's first forestry school. The Cradle of Forestry offers four miles of paved trails, guided walks, exhibits, family-oriented activities and events that show the significance of conservation history. The center also focuses on stewardship and forest values.

The movement to establish the Cradle of Forestry began in 1914. Enabled by the Weeks Act, George Vanderbilt's widow, Edith, sold a 6,840-acre tract to the U.S. Government. This tract became the Cradle of Forestry in America.

In 1961 at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the 1911 Weeks Act, Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman recognized the Cradle's contributions to forestry education.

Today visitors can wander through historic cabins, a schoolhouse and observe the wonder of an antique logging train. Travel along the Forest Discovery Trail or play the scavenger hunt and "fly" over a forest fire in the Forest Discovery Center. Watch the film, "There's Magic at the



Students from America's first forestry school participate in a field study.

Cradle," a fable about a twelve-year-old girl who comes to love the forest. Discover the new Adventure Zone, created especially for those on the autism spectrum. On summer Thursday mornings, join Woodsy Owl's Curiosity Club, a nature-based program for children ages 4-7.

RECOVERY HIGHLIGHTS

More than \$13.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds have created new or improved recreation sites and facilities across the forest. Most projects will be completed in 2011.

North Carolina's national forests offer a wealth of recreation opportunities, from hiking and fishing in the mountains to horseback and off-highway-vehicle riding in the Piedmont to canoeing at the coast.

During 2010, recovery funds helped maintain 80 miles of trail in North Carolina's national forests. A target of 103 miles will be accomplished. Local youth from the Student Conservation Association repaired additional miles. Visitors to campgrounds and other recreation sites will benefit from seven new buildings and one additional restroom completed in 2010. Improvements at Roan Mountain Recreation Area will be finished before the site opens in June.

Ten Civilian Conservation Corps-era buildings, such as Wayah Bald Tower on Nantahala Ranger District and Pine Cliff Shelter on the Croatan National Forest, received new roofs and other restoration.

Research station issues report card on sustainability

The Forest Service's Southern Research Station recently published the Western North Carolina Report Card on Forest Sustainability.

"Sustainability means different things to different people, but we can all agree that forests are valuable to this region," said Mary Carol Koester, one of the report's authors. "These forests provide clean water, wildlife habitat, protect and enrich soil, filter the air and provide settings for recreation and renewal."

The report card assesses and ranks forest biodiversity, production, ecosystem health, soil, water, air, carbon cycling, socioeconomic benefits and policy. For more information or report card copies, see: wnforestreportcard.org and pubrequest@fs.fed.us.

CAMPING IN THE MOUNTAINS



Fees subject to change

MAP NUMBER	RESERVATIONS*	DUMP STATION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	AMPHITHEATER	SHOWERS	DRINKING WATER	BOAT RAMP	SWIMMING/WADING	FISHING	TRAILS	FEE	NUMBER OF SITES	Call to verify specific opening and closing dates.
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NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST													COMMENTS	
BRISTOL HORSE CAMP All year. From HAYESVILLE, take SR 1307 for 3 miles to SR 1300, go 5.7 miles to SR 1344 (FR 340). Go 7 miles on FR 340.	5											\$5	7	On Fires Creek. Offers horse camping and tethering posts. Tusquitee District: 828-837-5152.
CABLE COVE Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From FONTANA VILLAGE, take NC 28S, 4.7 miles, turn left on FR 520 for 1.4 miles.	24											\$10	26	Near Fontana Lake. One-mile nature trail. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
CHEOAH POINT Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From ROBBINSVILLE, take NC 129N 5.8 miles, left on SR 1145 for 0.3 mile, right on SR 1147 for 1 mile.	23	*										\$15-\$20	26	Sites 1-17: \$15, first-come first served. Sites 18-23, \$20, RV sites. 2 walk-in cabins, electrical hookup outside, \$35/night. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
HANGING DOG Apr. 1-Sept. 30. From MURPHY, take NC 1326W for 5 miles.	2	*										\$8-\$16	52	On Hiwassee Lake. Tusquitee District: 828-837-5152.
HORSE COVE Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From ROBBINSVILLE, take US 129N for 1 mile, left on NC 143W for 10 miles, right on SR 1159 for 2.3 miles, right at Joyce Kilmer Road for 0.5 mile.	22											\$10	18	Five sites all year. In winter, no water, \$5 fee. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
HURRICANE CREEK ♦ Mar. 15-Dec. 15 (depending on weather) Go south from Standing Indian on FR 67 (gravel) for 2 miles.	7											\$6	*	Undesignated sites. Nantahala District. Campground office: 828-369-0442.
JACKRABBIT MOUNTAIN May 1-Sept. 30. From HAYESVILLE, take US 64E for 6.2 miles, turn left on NC 175 for 3 miles, turn right on SR 1115.	6	*										\$15-\$30	100	On Chatuge Lake. Some lakefront sites, picnic pavilion in campground: first-come, first-served. Tusquitee District: 828-837-5152.
STANDING INDIAN ♦ May 1-Nov. 27. From FRANKLIN, take US 64W for 9 miles, turn left on old US 64 and follow signs.	9	*										\$14-\$28	84	On Nantahala River. Nantahala District. Campground office: 828-369-0442.
TSALI Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From BRYSON CITY, take US turn right SR 1286 and go one mile to entrance.	25											\$15	41	On Fontana Lake. Adjacent to Tsali mountain bike and horse trail complex. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
VAN HOOK GLADE ♦ April 1-Oct. 30. From HIGHLANDS, take US.64W for 4 miles, turn right at sign.	28	*										\$16	19	Campers may use Cliffside Lake facilities. Nantahala District. Campground Manager: 828-526-5918.
PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST													COMMENTS	
BLACK MOUNTAIN ♦ Mid-April-Oct. 31. From BURNSVILLE, take US 19E for 5 miles, turn right on NC80S for 12 miles, right on FR 472 for 3 miles.	59											\$19	44	On South Toe River. Interpretive programs in-season. Appalachian Dist. Campground office: 828-675-5616.
BOONE FORK May 31-Sept. 7. From LENOIR, take NC 90W for 7 miles. Turn right on SR 1368 for 3 miles, turn right on FR 2055.	68											\$3	14	On Boone Fork Creek. Fishing pond. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.
CAROLINA HEMLOCKS ♦ Mid-April-Oct. 31. From BURNSVILLE, take US 19E for 5 miles, turn right on NC 80 for 9 miles.	62											\$19	37	On South Toe River. Appalachian District. Campground office: 828-675-5616.
CURTIS CREEK Apr. 1-Nov. 30. From OLD FORT, take US 70E for 1.7 miles, turn left on FR 482.	57											\$5	27	RV and tent camping. On Curtis Creek. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.
DAVIDSON RIVER ♦ All year. From BREVARD, take US 64E to US 276, turn left. Follow US 276 for 1.5 miles.	38											\$20-\$40	161	Limited sites with electrical hookups, \$5 surcharge; Pisgah District. Campground office: 828-862-5960.
HARMON DEN May 1-Oct. 31. From CANTON, take I-40W to Exit 7, take FR148 for 2.4 miles, right on FR 3526. Go .75 mile, turn left.	51	*										\$15	10	Up to 8 people and 4 horses per site. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
LAKE POWHATAN ♦ Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From ASHEVILLE, take I-26E to exit 33, turn left on NC 191S for 4 miles, turn right on Bent Creek Ranch Rd., go 3.5 miles to entrance on left.	49	*										\$20-\$40	98	Lifeguard available. Interpretive programs in season. Pisgah District. Campground office: 828-667-0391.
MORTIMER Apr. 1-Nov. 30. From LENOIR, take NC 90W to Collettsville. Turn right on SR 1328 (turns to gravel), go 8.5 miles. At NC 90, turn left.	67											\$10	19	On Thorpe Creek and near Wilson Creek. Picnic shelter. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.
NORTH MILLS RIVER ♦ All year. From ASHEVILLE, take I-26E to exit 40, turn right on 280W, go 4 miles, turn right on SR 1345, go 5 miles.	46	*										\$17	31	One loop open year-round with vault toilet. Pisgah District. Campground Manager: 828-890-3284.
ROCKY BLUFF May 1-Oct. 31. From HOT SPRINGS, take NC 209S, go 3.3 miles, turn left into campground.	53											\$8	30	On Spring Creek. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
SUNBURST ♦ Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From WAYNESVILLE, take US 276S for 7 miles, turn right on NC 215S, go 8 miles.	35											\$13	10	Pisgah District. Campground Manager: 828-648-7841.

♦ Operated by private concessionaire. *To make reservations, call 877-444-6777, TDD:877-833-6777 or www.recreation.gov ★ Primitive campsites

Dispersed camping across mountain forests

To limit impact, dispersed camping is only allowed at designated sites in these areas:

Pisgah National Forest: throughout the Pisgah Ranger District; in corridors along Neals Creek, South Toe River, Big Ivy Road, Cold Springs Creek and River Road/French Broad River in the

Appalachian Ranger District; and along the Curtis Creek corridor in the Grandfather Ranger District. **Nantahala National Forest:** along corridors of the Cheoah, Santeetlah and Tellico rivers in the Cheoah and Tusquitee Ranger Districts.

Areas closed to dispersed camping: Bent Creek Experimental Forest; the Cradle of Forestry's developed areas; the Wilson Creek corridor; land around Balsam Lake; the Coweeta Experi-

mental Forest; U.S. 64's Cullasaja Gorge corridor; Fontana Lake's Finger Lake Day-Use Area; the 1,000-foot corridor along the Nantahala River between Silvermine Creek and Junaluska Road, including any islands in the river; developed day-use sites and campgrounds; many wildlife openings; and areas with "No Camping" signs. For site-specific information, call ranger districts listed on the back page.

GROUP CAMPGROUNDS

North Carolina's national forests offer group campgrounds that are designed for groups of 25 to 100 people per site. Some group campgrounds have established tent pads, tables, fire rings, flush toilets and showers, while others offer a large grassy field and chemical toilets.

Some group camps are reserved through ranger district offices where the site is located. A list of district office phone numbers and addresses are listed on Page 16. Other sites are reserved through the National Recreation Reservation Service.

★ **FOR NRRS RESERVATIONS:** Call the National Recreation Reservation Service toll free at 877-444-6777 or TDD: 877-833-6777.

Visit the web site: www.recreation.gov. TDD customers: 877-833-6777. A service fee is charged per reservation.

Lodging in the national forests



Balsalm Lake Lodge offers a group getaway.

BALSALM LAKE LODGE: Surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains on the Highlands District, Balsalm Lake Lodge offers a special getaway for groups who reserve the whole facility for \$170 to \$200 per night. The lodge includes 16 twin beds with

all linens, a kitchen with utensils and three bathrooms. All facilities are fully accessible to people with disabilities. Overlooking a small lake, the lodge offers trails and fishing piers that are fully accessible.

SWAN CABIN: For a primitive cabin experience, you can rent the Swan Cabin on the Cheoah District for \$25 per night.

This 1931 three-room log cabin has one and a half stories with a loft on the upper floor. Furniture includes a wood stove for heat and nine rope-strung bed frames suitable for sleeping bags. Water is from a spring a quarter-mile away; a restroom is out back.

The lodges are available by reservation only through the National Reservation Service at 877-444-6777 or TDD: 877-833-6777.

To make reservations on-line, go to the service's website: www.recreation.gov. A service fee is charged.

GROUP CAMPING IN THE MOUNTAINS

GROUP CAMP	MAP NO.	RANGER DISTRICT	CALL TO RESERVE	ACTIVITIES	FACILITIES	MAX. NUMBER OF PEOPLE	SEASON	FEE/SITE
Appletree	15	Nantahala	828-524-6441	[Hiking] [Fishing]	[Picnic] [F] [RV]	2 sites: up to 25; 2 sites: up to 50	April 1-Oct. 31	\$50-\$100
Briar Bottom ♦	58	Appalachian	★877-444-6777	[Hiking] [Fishing] [Biking]	[Picnic] [F] [RV] Tent camping only	6 sites: up to 50	Mid-April-Oct. 31	\$55
Cove Creek ♦	40	Pisgah	★877-444-6777	[Hiking] [Fishing] [Biking]	[Picnic] [V] [RV]	2 sites: up to 100	Year-round	\$95
Kimsey Creek ♦	8	Nantahala	★877-444-6777	[Hiking] [Fishing]	[Picnic] [V] [RV] Limited RV use	3 sites: up to 25	May 1-Oct. 31	\$50
Kuykendall ♦	36	Pisgah	★877-444-6777	[Fishing]	[Picnic] [V] [RV]	1 site: up to 100	Year-round	\$95
Rattler Ford ♦	20	Cheoah	★877-444-6777	[Hiking] [Fishing]	[Picnic] [F] [RV] [RV] [RV]	4 sites: up to 25	Apr. 1-Oct. 31	\$50
Silvermine	54	Appalachian	★877-444-6777	[Hiking] [Fishing]	[Picnic] [V] [RV]	1 site: up to 50	May 1-Oct. 31	1-25: \$25 26-50: \$40
Wash Creek	47	Pisgah	828-877-3265	[Fishing]	[Picnic] [V]	1 site: up to 35; 15 vehicles	Year-round	\$35
White Pines ♦	42	Pisgah	★877-444-6777	[Fishing]	[Picnic] [V] [RV] Tent camping only	2 sites: up to 25	Year-round	\$50

★ Reservation Service web site: www.recreation.gov ♦ Private concessionaire operated

CALL TO CONFIRM OPENING AND CLOSING DATES OF GROUP CAMPS FEES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Plenty to do at Appletree Group Campground

by Delce Dyer

Looking for a place where your group can camp near the Nantahala River? The four sites at Appletree Group Campground accommodate as many as 150 people: two sites for up to 25 each and two for up to 50 each.

Each site has its own picnic shelter, group gathering area with a fire ring and lantern posts, restroom with flush toilets, water hydrant, parking area and grassy field for tents. The campground offers a shower house and an on-site host.

You can play volleyball or other games in the campground's open areas; hike right out of the campground on more than 20 miles of interconnecting loops; or discover a section of the long-distance Bartram National Recreation Trail. Avid anglers can cast lines for trout that are stocked in streams near the campground.

Nearby, raft the Nantahala River, drive the Mountain Waters Scenic Byway or catch breathtaking views from Wayah Bald's fire tower. In the fall, taste apples from the trees.

Reservations are required. Only occupants have access through a gate's combination lock. For more details, contact the Nantahala District at (828) 524-6441. Open April 1-Oct. 31, the campground is popular during summer and more peaceful during off-seasons and weekdays.

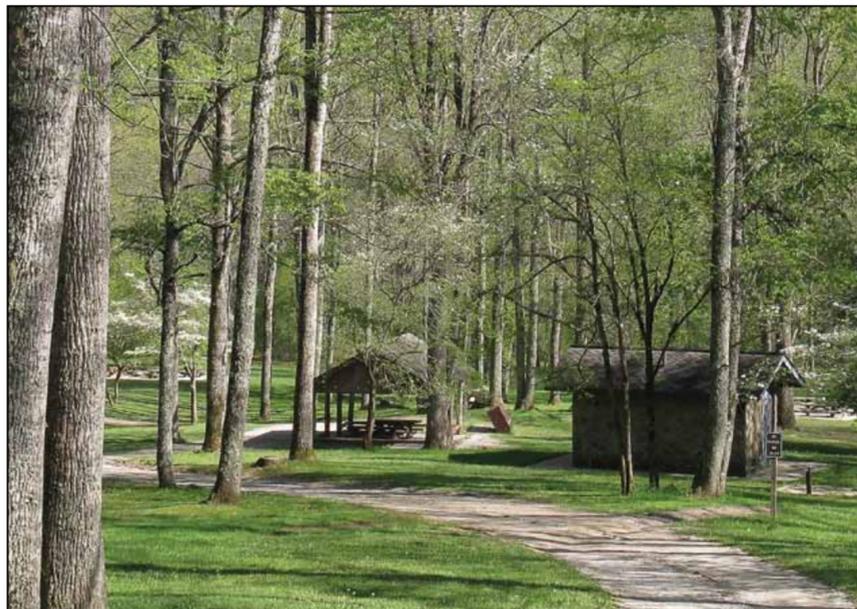


PHOTO BY DELCE DYER

Appletree Group activities include hiking 20 miles of interconnecting loops or discovering a section of the Bartram National Recreation Trail. Anglers can snag a trout in the nearby stream.



GET IN THE WATER

PHOTO BY DAVID WRIGHT

A kayaker rides the Cheoah River's rolling whitewater, where an accessible launch is offered.

Visit the lakes and rivers in North Carolina's National Forests to launch your watercraft, fish, swim or just to enjoy the scenery and wildlife from the shorelines.

BOAT & CANOE LAUNCHES

Many launches designed for motorized watercraft are managed cooperatively between the Forest Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. *Look for star below.

Croatan National Forest

Brice Creek vicinity: • Brice Creek Boat Launch: picnic tables, restroom, fishing and viewing platform, no fee. Launch site for five-mile interpretive canoe trail on Brice Creek.

Catfish Lake vicinity: • Catfish Lake Canoe Launch: no fee, canoes or flat-bottomed boats recommended. • Great Lake Canoe Launch: courtesy dock, no fee.

Neuse River vicinity: • Cahoque Creek Boat Launch: restroom, no fee. • Oyster Point Canoe Launch: restroom, no fee. Shallow water at launch. Near Oyster Point Campground and Neusiok National Recreation Trail.

White Oak River vicinity: • Dixon Fields Canoe Launch: no fee. • Haywood Landing Boat Launch: courtesy dock, restroom, no fee.

• Long Point Canoe Launch: courtesy dock, picnic tables, restroom, no fee. • Cedar Point Boat Launch: courtesy dock, picnic tables, restroom, no fee. Near Cedar Point Campground and Tidelands National Recreation Trail.

Saltwater Adventure Trail: Paddle around Croatan National Forest on water trail which connects Brice Creek, Neuse, Newport and White Oak Rivers and Bogue Sound to form 100-mile network through coastal forest and tidal flats. See Page 14 for campgrounds.

Nantahala National Forest

Balsalm Lake vicinity: • Balsalm Lake Canoe Launch: picnic tables, covered pavilion, restroom, accessible fishing piers, no fee. Nantahala District.

Chatuge Lake vicinity: • Jackrabbit Mountain: *courtesy dock, restroom, no fee. Part of Jackrabbit Mountain Recreation Area with camping, swimming, picnicking, fishing pier, biking and hiking trails. Tusquitee District.

Fontana Lake vicinity: • Finger Lakes Kayak Launch: picnic tables, restroom, no fee, Nantahala District. • Lemmons Branch Boat Launch: courtesy dock, restroom, no fee. Near Tsali Recreation Area with camping, mountain biking and horse trails. Cheoah District.

• Cable Cove Boat Launch: courtesy dock, no fee. Cheoah District. • Tsali Boat Launch: *Courtesy dock, no fee. Near Tsali Recreation Area, with camping, biking and horse trails. Cheoah District.

Hiwassee Lake vicinity: • Hanging Dog Boat Launches: *courtesy dock, restroom, no fee; winter and summer ramps provide year-round access. Part of Hanging Dog Recreation Area with camping, picnicking, nearby biking and hiking trails. Tusquitee District.

Santeetlah Lake vicinity: • Avey Branch Boat Launch: * no fee, Cheoah District. • Cheoah Point Boat Launch: *accessible courtesy dock, no fee. Near Cheoah Point Recreation Area with camping, picnicking, swimming nearby. Cheoah District. • Massey Branch Boat Launch: * courtesy dock, restroom, no fee. Picnic facilities and district office nearby. Cheoah District.

Pisgah National Forest

Hot Springs-French Broad River vicinity: • Stackhouse Canoe Launch: restroom, no fee. Appalachian District.

Uwharrie National Forest

Badin Lake vicinity: • Cove Boat Launch, *no fee. **Pee Dee River vicinity:** • Deep Water Canoe Launch, no fee.

WHITewater RAFTING

Each of these rivers has its own personality, with diverse paddling challenges and outstanding scenery. For details about these rivers and their difficulty levels, see www.americanwhitewater.org. Private outfitters and guides offer customized services for extra fees on each waterway.

Nantahala National Forest

Nantahala River vicinity: Located along Mountain Waters Scenic Byway. Nantahala District: • Nantahala River Boat Launch: restrooms, changing rooms. Recreation permit required for river day use, season passes offered. • Ferebee Memorial Boat Launch/Take out: picnic tables, restrooms, recreation permit required for river day use; season passes available. • Nantahala River Beaching Area Launch and Take-Out: viewing platform; recreation permit required for river day use, season passes available. • Two take-outs available for commercial use on Nantahala River. **Cheoah River vicinity:** • Cheoah River accessible boat launch and takeout. Cheoah River Recreation Permit required on water release days. Near Cheoah Point Recreation Area with camping, picnicking, swimming. Motor boat launch nearby. Cheoah District.

WATER SAFETY

- Plan your route and carry a map.
- Know water rescue techniques and first aid.
- Carry safety equipment including dry clothing and a first-aid kit.
- Store gear in a watertight container.
- Dress for changing weather conditions.
- On the day of your trip, let someone know your itinerary.
- Wear appropriate safety gear, including flotation device and helmet.
- Never swim or boat alone.
- Know your limits; don't attempt a section of river beyond your skill level.
- Never swim or boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Consult internet or news outlets for severe weather forecasts or water levels.
- Remember that your cell phone and GPS unit may not work in remote areas.

Pisgah National Forest

French Broad River vicinity: • Stackhouse Canoe Launch, restroom, no fee. Appalachian District.

Nolichucky River vicinity: • Poplar Canoe Launch, restroom, no fee. Appalachian District.

Wilson Creek vicinity: • No launch, restroom, no fee. Wilson Creek is a designated wild and scenic river. Mortimer Recreation Area with camping and picnicking. Grandfather District.

FISHING & HUNTING

Outside of developed recreation areas, fishing and hunting are permitted throughout North Carolina's national forests.

While the Forest Service manages the habitat and protects water quality in the national forests, the North Carolina Wildlife Commission regulates fishing and hunting.

Miles of streams and dozens of lakes offer warmwater and cold-water fishing. Some waters are stocked and some support wild fish.

According to the commission, any lands open to public hunting are called "game lands." Many game animals thrive in the national forests. The Forest Service is emphasizing equal access to hunting. For maps listing open roads at national forests, check North Carolina's national forests website: www.fs.gov/mfsc.

For more details, contact the Wildlife Resources Commission at www.ncwildlife.org or call (888) 248-6834.

SPECIAL DAY-USE AREAS



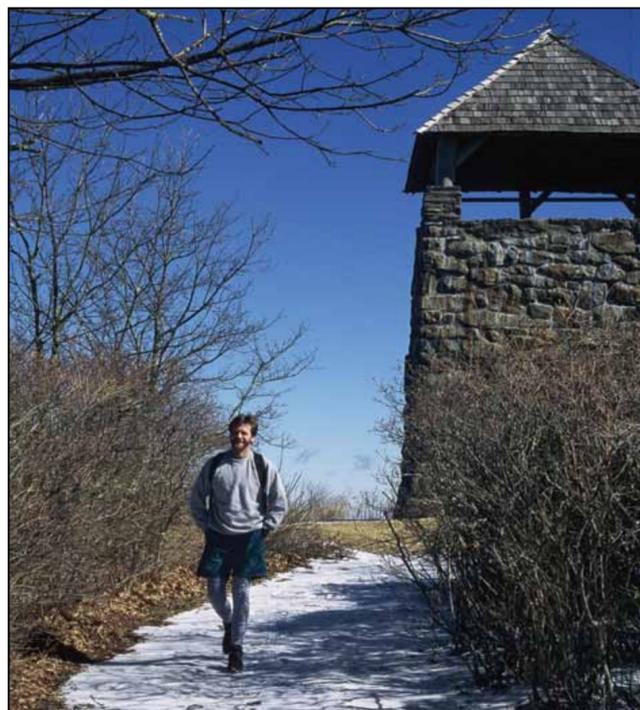
Fees subject to change

operated by private concessionaire
MAP NUMBER
PICNIC AREA
RESTROOMS
DRINKING WATER
TRAILS
OTHER ACTIVITIES
FEE (\$) *season pass available

Call to verify opening and closing dates



NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST	MAP NUMBER	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	DRINKING WATER	TRAILS	OTHER ACTIVITIES	FEE (\$)	COMMENTS
BALSAM LAKE From TUCKASEGEE, take NC 281S for 8.75 miles. Turn left on SR 1756, go about 6 miles (1 mile past lodge).	34	F	F				No fee	Open all year. No water or restrooms in winter. Picnic shelter. Near Balsam Lake Lodge; Reserve lodge at 877-444-6777. Lake drained for repairs until summer 2011.
CHEOAH POINT BEACH From ROBBINSVILLE, take NC 129N for 5.8 miles. Go left on SR 1145 for 0.3 mile, and right on SR 1147 for 1 mile.	23	F	V				No fee	Open April to October. Swimming beach on Santeetlah Lake, picnic shelter. Boat ramp and campground nearby. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
CHEROHALA SKYWAY From ROBBINSVILLE, take U.S. 129N for 1 mile. Turn left on NC 143 for 10.2 miles to Santeetlah Gap.		F	V				No fee	Open all year. Drive 43 miles across crest of North Carolina/Tennessee mountains. Scenic overlooks, picnic spots, trails. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
CLIFFSIDE LAKE ♦ From HIGHLANDS, take U.S. 64W for 4.5 miles. Turn right at sign and go about 1 mile.	27	F	F				\$3/car ♦	Apr. 1-Oct. 31. Bathhouse with showers; seven short trails. Two shelters can be reserved. Nantahala District. Site manager: 828-526-5918.
DRY FALLS From HIGHLANDS, take U.S. 64W for 3.5 miles, falls on left.	29	F	V				No fee	Open all year. Walk under waterfall without getting wet. Nantahala District: 828-524-6441.
FIRES CREEK From HAYESVILLE, go 5 mi. on U.S. 64W. Turn right on NC 175 for 2.5 miles, left on SR 1344 for two miles.	4	F	V				No fee	Open all year. Hike 0.7-mile Cover Trail, (NC birding trail), 0.7-mile loop to waterfall; 53-mile hiking system. Horse trails nearby. Tusquitee District: 828-837-5152.
JACKRABBIT MOUNTAIN From HAYESVILLE, take U.S. 64E for 6.2 miles. Turn right on NC 175 for 2.5 miles. Turn right on SR 1155.	6	F	F				\$3/car	May 1-Sept. 30. Swimming beach on Chatuge Lake. Popular for watersports. Hot showers, picnic shelter. Tusquitee District: 828-837-5152.
JOYCE KILMER MEMORIAL FOREST From ROBBINSVILLE, take U.S. 129N for 1 mile. Left on NC 143, go 10.2 miles. Right on SR 1159, 2 miles to entrance.	21	F	V				No fee	Open all year. Walk through this old growth forest on short loop trails. NC birding trail also offers great wild-flower views. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
CHEROKEE LAKE From MURPHY, take U.S. 64W for 8 miles. Turn right on NC 294, go 3 miles. Turn right on FR 313 for 0.5 mile.	1	F	F				No fee	Apr. 1-Oct. 30. Accessible fishing pier on Cherokee Lake. Picnic shelter. Tusquitee District: 828-837-5152.
NANTAHALA GORGE Take U.S. 19 between ALMOND and TOPTON. Travel through gorge alongside river.	16/17	F	F				River-use fee: \$1/person ♦	Open all year. Rafting on 8.5 miles of whitewater. Fee bracelets and season passes at river outfitters. Picnicking at Ferebee Memorial. Nantahala District: 828-524-6441.
STANDING INDIAN PICNIC AREA ♦ From FRANKLIN, take U.S. 64W for 9 miles. Turn left on old U.S. 64, follow signs.	9	F	F				\$2/car	April 1-Nov. 30. To reserve picnic shelter, call campground office at 828-369-0442. Campground nearby.
TSALI TRAILS From BRYSON CITY, take U.S. 19S for 9 miles. Turn right on NC 28 for 3.5 miles. Turn right on SR 1286; go 1 mile.	25	F	F				\$2/trail user ♦	Trails open year-round. Near Fontana Lake. 28 miles of bike and horse trails. Season pass at district office and two local vendors. Cheoah District: 828-479-6431.
WAYAH BALD From FRANKLIN, take U.S. 64W. Turn right on old US 64 to SR 1310 (Wayah Rd.). Turn right on FR 69 for 4.5 miles.	11	F	V				No fee	Open all year. Enjoy panoramic views from historic fire tower. Crossed by Appalachian and Bartram trails. Nantahala District: 828-524-6441.
WHITESIDE MOUNTAIN From HIGHLANDS, take U.S. 64E about 5 miles. Turn right on SR 1680. Follow signs.	32		V				\$2/car ♦	Open all year. Hike two-mile-loop trail to 4,930-foot summit for outstanding views. Season pass available at district office. Nantahala District: 828-524-6441.
WHITewater FALLS From CASHIERS, take NC 107S for 10 miles to NC-SC line. Drive 1 mile, take first road to left. Follow signs.	33	F	F				\$2/car ♦	Open all year. 411-foot waterfall. Two picnic shelters. Season pass available at district office. Nantahala District: 828-524-6441.



An Appalachian Trail hiker walks past the Wayah Bald Tower. PHOTO BY PAT MOMICH

74-year-old lookout tower gets much-needed repairs

by Julie Trzeciak

For nearly three-quarters of a century, the Wayah Bald Tower has offered 360-degree views of the Great Smoky Mountains and Georgia's rolling hills. The stone structure stands like a monument on the 5,385-foot summit where flame azalea and rhododendron flourish and hikers pass on the Appalachian and Bartram trails.

The Civilian Conservation Corps built this 53-foot three-story rock structure during 1935 to 1937.

In 1947, the tower's top story was removed because of water damage. Over the past 10 years, the tower showed severe signs of aging. Walls weakened, stones shifted and more cracks appeared—the result of harsh winters, heavy use and vandalism.

“The tower definitely needed major reconstruction,” said Rodney Snedeker, forest archaeologist for the National Forests in North Carolina. But thanks to federal recovery funds,

the historic tower received much-needed repairs.

“The tower's repair work was very labor-intensive,” Snedeker said. “The entire walls were removed rock by rock, and an interior concrete wall poured and rocks were replaced.”

The initial repair work started in June 2009, when the Forest Service awarded a \$75,000 contract to a construction company that restored the tower.

Work was completed in May 2010, and the lookout tower opened again to offer awesome vistas for Appalachian Trail hikers and couples who occasionally held their weddings in the Wayah Bald tower.

During 2011, the Wayah Bald day-use area will receive additional improvements: an accessible restroom and accessible parking lot will be added to the day-use site.

For more details about the lookout tower, call the Nantahala District at (828) 524-6441.

\$700,000 in recovery funds boosts Roan Mountain

by Alice Cohen

Near the Tennessee state line in Mitchell County lies Roan Mountain, a 6,300-foot mountain where open expanses of treeless land offer panoramic views that stretch for miles.

Roan Mountain's unique high-elevation grassy balds offer habitats for unique plant and animal species, such as Gray's lily, rock gnome lichen and Northern flying squirrels.

In 2009, more than \$700,000 in Economic Recovery Act dollars were dedicated to improve the Roan Mountain Recreation Area. Nine contracts were awarded to address a range of projects. A new eight-unit accessible restroom facility at the Cloudland parking area replaced the dilapidated 1960s restroom facility.

Visitors will enjoy a new observation deck, repaved connecting trail at Rhododendron Gardens

Roan Mountain's grassy balds are some of the most pristine examples of grassy bald communities in the Southern Appalachians.

that covers the sea of rhododendron and a resurfaced paved road that leads to the Cloudland parking lot.

Beyond facility work, ongoing restoration of unique plants occurs in Grassy Balds at Grassy Ridge, Bradley Gap and Big Hump Mountain. The work involves mowing, weed-eating and cutting shrubs and blackberries that invade these grassy bald communities.

Visit Roan Mountain in early summer to experience the spectacle of rhododendron in bloom, go for a hike or simply soak in some views.



Catawba rhododendrons display their magenta blooms on Roan Mountain.

SPECIAL DAY-USE AREAS



Fees subject to change

operated by private concessionaire
MAP NUMBER
PICNIC AREA
RESTROOMS
DRINKING WATER
TRAILS
OTHER ACTIVITIES
DAY-USE FEE (\$) *season pass available

Call to verify opening and closing dates



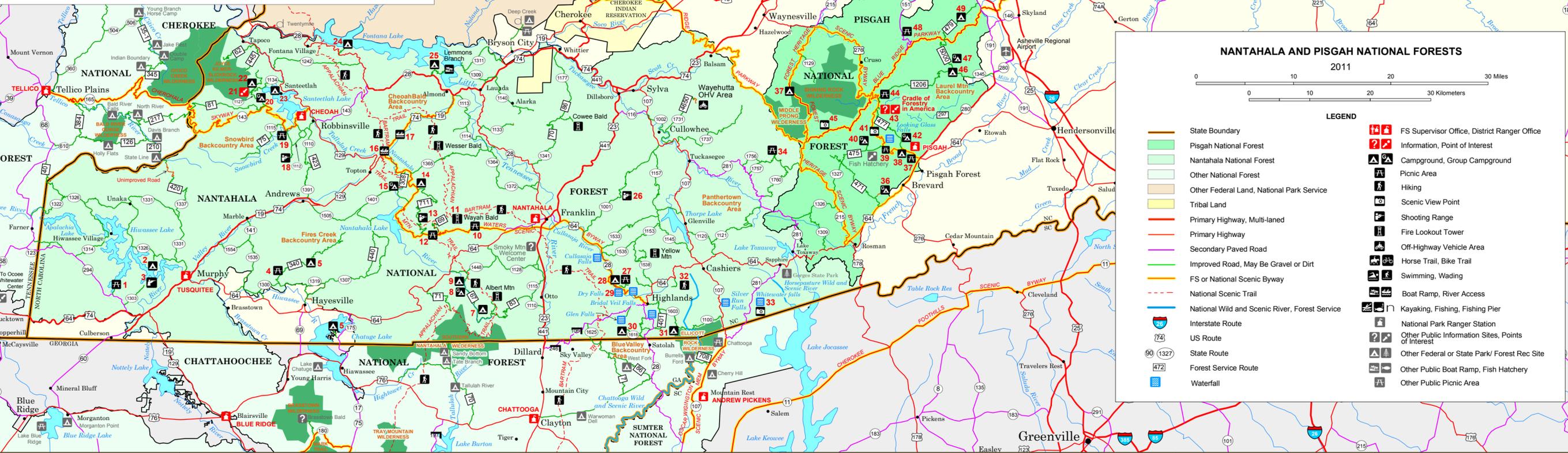
PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST	MAP NUMBER	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	DRINKING WATER	TRAILS	OTHER ACTIVITIES	DAY-USE FEE (\$)	COMMENTS
CAROLINA HEMLOCKS ♦ From BURNSVILLE, take US 19E for 5 miles. Turn right on NC 80 for 9 miles.	62	F	F				\$5/car; \$100/day for shelter reservation.	April 20-Oct. 31. On South Toe River. Wading and tubing. For picnic shelter reservations, call 877-444-6777. Appalachian District. Campground office: 828-675-5616
COLD SPRING Take I-40 west of CANTON, to Harmon Den (Exit 7). Travel northeast on FR 148 for 3.7 miles, stay right; picnic area on left.	51	F					No fee	Open all year. Pretty picnic spot in heart of Harmon Den. Fish in Cold Spring Creek. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
COON TREE From Brevard, take US 64E to US 276. Turn left and follow US 276N for 4 miles.	39	F	F				No fee	Open all year. Restrooms open early April to late October. Pisgah District: 828-877-3265.
CRADLE OF FORESTRY IN AMERICA From BREVARD, take US 64E to US 276. Turn left and follow U.S. 276N for 11 miles.	43	F	F				\$5/adult; free: 15 & under.	Mid-April to early November. Logging locomotive, Forest Discovery Center, trails, exhibits, movie, interpretive programs. Cradle of Forestry: 828-877-3130.
LAKE POWHATAN ♦ From ASHEVILLE, take I-26E to exit 33. Turn left NC 191S for 4 miles. Turn right on Bent Creek Ranch Rd., go 3.5 miles.	49	F	F				\$5/car for day use. ♦	April 1-Oct. 31. Swimming beach with lifeguards in summer. Accessible fishing pier. Pisgah District. Campground Office: 828-677-0391.
MAX PATCH TRAILHEAD From HOT SPRINGS, take NC 209S for 7.3 miles to SR 1175. Take SR 1175 south for 5.3 miles, SR 1181 for 3.5 miles, right on SR 1182, go 1.5 miles.	53						No fee	Open all year. Two loop trails to grassy summit. Crossed by Appalachian Trail. Fishing pond 0.5 mile north on SR 1182. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
MURRAY BRANCH From HOT SPRINGS, take US 25/70W across bridge, turn left end of bridge, right on SR 1304. Go 4 miles. Turn left.	55	F	V				No fee, no reservations for picnic shelter	May 1-Oct. 31 Picnic, fish along French Broad River. Picnic shelters. Accessible fishing piers. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
NORTH MILLS RIVER ♦ From ASHEVILLE, take I-26E to Exit 40. Turn right on NC 280W for 4 miles. Turn right on SR 1345, go 5 miles.	46	F	F				\$3/car for day use. ♦	April 1-Oct. 31. Trails nearby for hikers, bikers and horses. Adjacent to campground. Pisgah District. Campground office: 828-890-3284.
OLD FORT From Old Fort, take NC 1407 for 4.2 miles. Turn left.	56	F	V				No fee.	April 1-Oct. 31. On Mill Creek. Trailhead for Point Lookout Trail. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.
PINK BEDS From BREVARD, take US 64E to US 276. Turn left and follow US 276N for 12 miles. Turn right.	44	F	V				No fee. Reserve shelter for \$50/day.	Open all year. For shelter reservations, maximum group size is 40. To reserve a shelter, call Pisgah District: 828-877-3265.
ROAN MOUNTAIN From BAKERSVILLE, Take NC 261N for 13 miles to Carvers Gap. Turn left onto SR 261A and go 3 miles.	63	F	F				\$3/car ♦	June 6-late October. Renowned for rhododendron gardens, grassy balds, short trails, scenic vistas and Appalachian Trail. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
ROCKY BLUFF From HOT SPRINGS, take NC 209S for 3.3 miles. Rocky Bluff is on left.	53	F	F				No fee for day use.	May 1-Oct. 31. Walk the 1.2-mile Spring Creek Loop Trail that leads to Spring Creek, trout fishing. Adjacent to campground. Appalachian District: 828-682-6146.
SLIDING ROCK From BREVARD, take US 64E to US 276. Turn left and follow US 276N for 8 miles.	41		F				\$1/person; free: 6 & under	Open all year for viewing. Restrooms open Memorial Day to Labor Day. No alcohol or picnicking. Lifeguards on duty in season. Pisgah District: 828-877-3265.
SUNBURST ♦ Apr. 1-Oct. 31. From WAYNESVILLE, take US 276S for 7 miles, turn right on NC 215S, go 8 miles.	35	F	F				\$3/car	Open all year. Restrooms open from end of May to Labor Day weekends. Adjacent to campground. Pisgah District: 828-877-3265.
SYCAMORE FLATS From BREVARD, take US 64E to US 276. Turn left and follow U. 276N for 1 mile.	37	F	F				No fee. Reserve shelter for \$50/day	Open all year. On Davidson River. Shelter maximum group size: 40. To reserve a shelter, call Pisgah District: 828-877-3265.
TABLE ROCK From MORGANTON, take NC 181N. Turn left onto Ginger-cake Rd., fork left on NC 1265, continue on gravel FR 210. Go 4.5 mile and right on FR 99. Go 1.5 mile.	66	F	V				No fee	April 1-Dec. 31. Short trails travel rim of Linville Gorge to Table Rock's summit and to the Chimneys. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.
WISEMANS VIEW From LINVILLE FALLS, turn right on NC 183. Go 1 mile, turn right on SR 1238, Kistler Memorial Hwy. for 4.5 miles.	65		V				No fee	Open all year. Spectacular view of Linville Gorge. SR 1238 is a rough gravel road. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.

NANTHALA NATIONAL FOREST		
Site Number and Name	Facilities	Comments
1	Cherokee Lake	Accessible fishing pier
2	Hanging Dog	On Hiwassee Lake
3	Panther Top	
4	Fires Creek	30 miles of trails
5	Bristol Horse Camp	On Fires Creek, many trails
6	Jackrabbit Mountain	On Chatuge Lake, picnic shelters
7	Hurricane Creek	No water
8	Kimsey Creek	Group camp, by reservation
9	Standing Indian	On Kimsey Creek, picnic shelter
10	Arrowood Glade	Picnic shelter
11	Wayah Bald	Scenic overlook, Appalachian Trail nearby
12	Wayah Crest	Appalachian Trail nearby
13	Dirty John	Accessible shooting platform
14	Winesprings Horse Camp	15 miles of horse trails
15	Appletree	Group camp, by reservation
16	Nantahala Gorge	Roadside picnicking; Special Recreation Permit required for river use
17	Ferebee Memorial	Special Recreation Permit required for river use
18	Atoah	No fee, six stations
19	Snowbird	On Snowbird Creek
20	Rattler Ford	Group camp, by reservation
21	Joyce Kilmer	Memorial Forest
22	Horse Cove	In winter no water or fee
23	Cheoah Point	On Santeetlah Lake
24	Cable Cove	Near Fontana Lake
25	Tsali	Near Fontana Lake
26	Moss Knob	No fee, four shooting benches
27	Cliffside Lake	Two picnic shelters by reservation
28	Van Hook Glade	Campers may use Cliffside facilities
29	Dry Falls	In Cullasaja Gorge
30	Blue Valley	No water
31	Ammons Branch	No water
32	Whiteside Mountain	Two-mile trail to vista
33	Whitewater Falls	Highest falls in East
34	Balsam Lake	Balsam Lake Lodge nearby, by reservation only

PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST		
Site Number and Name	Facilities	Comments
35	Sunburst	On site of early logging town
36	Kuykendall	Group camp, by reservation
37	Sycamore Flats	Picnic shelter by reservation
38	Davidson River	Interpretive activities in season
39	Coontree	Accessible fishing platform
40	Cove Creek	Group camp, by reservation
41	Sliding Rock	Lifeguard on duty in season
42	White Pines	Group camp, by reservation
43	Cradle of Forestry	Exhibits, movie, guided tours
44	Pink Beds	Picnic shelter by reservation
45	Black Balsam	

PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST		
Site Number and Name	Facilities	Comments
46	North Mills River	On North Mills River
47	Wash Creek	Group camp, call 828-877-3265
48	Stony Fork	Picnic shelter available
49	Lake Powhatan	Lifeguard, guided activities in season
50	Cold Springs	On Cold Springs Creek
51	Harmon Den Horse Camp	By Reservation, call 828-622-3202
52	Max Patch	Panoramic view, pond
53	Rocky Bluff	On Spring Creek
54	Silvermine	Group camp, by reservation
55	Murray Branch	On French Broad River
56	Old Fort	Picnic Shelter
57	Curtis Creek	Tents only, no water
58	Briar Bottom	Group camp, by reservation
59	Black Mountain	On South Toe River, guided activities
60	Neals Creek	Former fish hatchery
61	Lost Cove	On South Toe River
62	Carolina Hemlocks	Picnic shelter, by reservation
63	Roan Mountain	Road closed in winter, Rhododendrons
64	Linville Gorge Info	Information, maps
65	Wisemans View	Views of Linville Gorge
66	Table Rock	Views of Linville Gorge
67	Mortimer	Near Wilson Creek
68	Boone Fork	On Boone Fork Creek

RECREATION BOX FACILITIES LEGEND					
Ⓐ	Camping	Ⓒ	Boat Ramp	Ⓔ	Bicycle Trail
Ⓐ	Group Camping	Ⓒ	Canoeing	Ⓔ	Horse Trail
Ⓐ	Camping Trailer	Ⓒ	Kayaking	Ⓔ	Scenic View
Ⓐ	Trailer Dump Station	Ⓒ	Tubing	Ⓔ	Information
Ⓐ	Picnicking	Ⓒ	Swimming	Ⓔ	Winter Recreation
Ⓐ	Restrooms	Ⓒ	Fishing	Ⓔ	Amphitheater
Ⓐ	Showers	Ⓒ	Hiking	Ⓔ	Accessible
Ⓐ	Drinking Water	Ⓒ	Interpretive Trail	Ⓔ	Fee Site



NANTHALA AND PISGAH NATIONAL FORESTS
2011

0 10 20 30 Miles
0 10 20 30 Kilometers

LEGEND

—	State Boundary	Ⓐ	FS Supervisor Office, District Ranger Office
—	Pisgah National Forest	Ⓐ	Information, Point of Interest
—	Nantahala National Forest	Ⓐ	Campground, Group Campground
—	Other National Forest	Ⓐ	Picnic Area
—	Other Federal Land, National Park Service	Ⓐ	Hiking
—	Tribal Land	Ⓐ	Scenic View Point
—	Primary Highway, Multi-laned	Ⓐ	Shooting Range
—	Primary Highway	Ⓐ	Fire Lookout Tower
—	Secondary Paved Road	Ⓐ	Off-Highway Vehicle Area
—	Improved Road, May Be Gravel or Dirt	Ⓐ	Horse Trail, Bike Trail
—	FS or National Scenic Byway	Ⓐ	Swimming, Wading
—	National Scenic Trail	Ⓐ	Boat Ramp, River Access
—	National Wild and Scenic River, Forest Service	Ⓐ	Kayaking, Fishing, Fishing Pier
Ⓐ	Interstate Route	Ⓐ	National Park Ranger Station
Ⓐ	US Route	Ⓐ	Other Public Information Sites, Points of Interest
Ⓐ	State Route	Ⓐ	Other Federal or State Park/Forest Rec Site
Ⓐ	Forest Service Route	Ⓐ	Other Public Boat Ramp, Fish Hatchery
Ⓐ	Waterfall	Ⓐ	Other Public Picnic Area

Create visions for favorite trails

Many visitors have their first real national forest experience when they get out of their vehicles and hit one of the forests' trails. Hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers are often passionate about their favorite trails and love sharing them with friends and family.

In 2011, trail enthusiasts will have a chance to share their visions for nonmotorized trails in a strategic trail-planning process. Starting this summer, the public can participate in workshops to:

- Review and evaluate trail-condition data
- Share their favorite trails.
- Discuss which trails work, don't work and why
- Prioritize future trail-system adjustments or additions.

The result of these workshops will be a plan for a trail system that offers many experiences for a variety of users, reduces or avoids impacts to other resources and better integrates with surrounding communities and public trail systems.

"North Carolina's national forests have greatly benefited over the years from the efforts of many trail volunteers and partners," said Candace Wyman, special projects coordinator. "Thousands of people worked tirelessly over the years to help enhance our trails.

"We hope visitors will bring their trail knowledge and passion to the table and help create a vision for the National Forests in North Carolina trail system," said Wyman.

SHOOTING RANGES

NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST

Atoah: This 100-yard range offers six shooting stations that are open all year. Any target is allowed, except clay pigeon. No permit is required. Cheoah District: (828) 479-6431.

Moss Knob: 150-yard range offers six covered firing lanes, open all year. No permit is required at the shooting range. Nantahala District: (828) 524-6441.

Panther Top: Open all year, this 100-yard range has covered stations with six 100-yard firing lines for rifles and four 25-yard firing lines for pistols. A \$2 user permit is required per day or \$25 season pass. Tusquitee District: (828) 837-5152.

Dirty John: This 100-yard range offers target frames at seven yards, 25 yards, 50 yards and 100 yards. Six covered stations are open all year. A \$3 per vehicle for one-day permit or \$7 season pass are available. Nantahala District: (828) 524-6441.

UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST

Flintlock Valley: This shooting range temporarily closed due to safety concerns. Improvements and alternative sites will be analyzed during this time. Uwharrie National Forest: (910) 576-6391.

Take a ride on the . . . JACKRABBIT TRAILS

by Julie Trzeciak

With rising numbers of mountain biking enthusiasts, finding a new trail in

Western North Carolina can sometimes be a challenge.

But a new system of trails at Jackrabbit Mountain is another alternative for mountain bikers and hikers.

Tracing the edges of Lake Chatuge's peninsulas, this trail system features 14 miles of trail that are located a half a mile from campsites offered at Jackrabbit Mountain Recreation Area.

People travel from Asheville, Atlanta and beyond to enjoy this biking and hiking hot spot, located in the Nantahala National Forest's Tusquitee Ranger District near Hayesville.

Each month during spring through fall, more than 1,000 hikers and bikers visit the 14-mile loop trail system.

"These fast-flowing, hard-packed trails are built on a stacked loop design," said Joanna Atkisson, who conceived the dream to create the trail system.

"All eight trails are connected to a core trail, which gives the option of riding 3.1 miles or adding other trails to build more mileage."

Atkisson became interested in creating a trail system while introducing mountain biking to children in Clay County school system's Pathways After School and Summer Program in 2001.

"When I realized no bike trails were in the county, that sparked the idea to build a system," said the Southern Appalachian Bicycle Association president.



A rider enjoys the Jackrabbit Trail, a 14-mile trail system for bikers and hikers in the Nantahala National Forest near Hayesville.

SABA, the Forest Service, Clay County Community Revitalization Association and Mike Riter of Trail Design Specialists collaborated to create this recreation area. Today the trails are reaping praises from riders, including comments such as "smooth-packed bliss," "family friendly fun." and "best maintained."

Last October Chain Buster Productions organized the first bike race at Jackrabbit. More than 300 mountain bikers competed in six- and 12-hour races.

Mountain bikers and hikers not only make tracks to this trail system, they also visit Jackrabbit Mountain Campground, just a half mile away (See Mountain Camping Chart on Page 3).

Discover more mountain bike getaways

National forest bike trails

North Carolina's national forests offer more than 245 miles of bike trails. Forest roads are also open for mountain biking, unless otherwise signed.

Near Hiwassee Lake

At Hanging Dog Recreation Area on the Tusquitee Ranger District, 7.2 miles of intersecting loops are offered. The trails start near the boat launch, with great Hiwassee Lake views.

Near Hot Springs

Mountain bikers can ride on three trails in Appalachian District's Hot Springs area. The 3.6-mile Laurel River Trail follows an old railroad grade.

The Golden Ridge Trail offers several vistas from Rich Mountain along its 7.5 mile route. Check out mountain views along Mill Ridge Trail's four miles of old roadbed.



SHARE THE TRAIL: Bikers yield to hikers and horses.

Near Bryson City

Tsali Recreation Area's challenging single-track trails overlook Fontana Lake and the Great Smoky Mountains.

Each day, half of the 38 designated trail miles are open to bikes, and the other half are open to horses. Users can pay a daily \$2-trail-use fee at trailhead. A \$15 annual pass is available at Cheoah District and two vendors.

Near Brevard and Asheville

The Pisgah District's trails systems offer many loop opportunities or places for solitude. Some popular biking areas: Bent Creek, near Asheville; Trace Ridge, near town of Mills River; Davidson River, near Brevard; and South Mills River, near town of Pisgah Forest.

Uwharrie National Forest

In the Piedmont area, Wood Run's mountain bike trails are becoming popular. Read more on Wood Run's trails on Page 13.

Get involved!

In 2010, volunteers donated more than 55,000 hours to enhance recreation in North Carolina's national forests. Trail volunteers help maintain many forest trails. To volunteer, call a ranger district or find trail-related links at www.fs.usda.gov/nfsc.

Explore BACKCOUNTRY



The South Toe River valley offers a background of beauty.

PHOTO BY BILL LEA

50 miles of trail cross South Toe River Valley

South Toe River Backcountry Area offers several backcountry adventures: Climb 3,700 feet up Mount Mitchell, hike through less-traveled tall spruce-fir forests or pitch a tent on a bed of pine needles.

Encompassing 1,855 acres in the Black Mountains, this area includes the slopes of Mount Mitchell and the South Toe River Valley.

More than 50 miles of trails cross the deep woods of this valley, located in the Pisgah National Forest's Appalachian District.

The South Toe River Valley's south and southeastern sides are lined by the 469-mile scenic Blue

Ridge Parkway. Nearby is Mount Mitchell State Park, home to the East's highest peak at 6,684 feet.

Besides great backpacking opportunities, South Toe offers other activities: hike the steep 5.7-mile Mount Mitchell Trail, camp at Black Mountain, Briar Bottom Group or Carolina Hemlocks campgrounds, fish in the South Toe River or ride horses on Buncombe Horse Trail. All trails are open to hikers.

For more details about this area, call Appalachian District at (828) 682-6146. Trail maps: South Toe River, Mount Mitchell and Big Ivy; NG Trails Illustrated 779.

Looking for a remote location to hike for a day or more? Wishing to escape the noise of traffic? Yearning to hear the sounds of a cascading stream or feel the waft of winds on a mountain ridgetop?

The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests provide these backcountry experiences and more.

With large blocks of forest with few open roads, backcountry areas offer a vast array of exquisite mountain scenery and recreation. Some provide a greater sense of remoteness and solitude than others.

All areas are open for hiking, and some have horse or bike trails. In the areas featured here, most trails are signed and blazed. Group size is not limited, although groups smaller than 15 are recommended.

So plan your adventure, get a trail map, fill your backpack with essentials and explore these forested backcountry areas:

Laurel Mountain

Near Brevard, 49 miles of interconnecting hiking trails; most allow mountain biking and horseback riding. A popular destination that offers streamside and ridgeline trails. Trail maps: Pisgah District; NG Trails Illustrated 780. Call: Pisgah District, (828) 877-3265.

Panther town

Near Cashiers, 30 miles of hiking trails; many allow both horseback riding and mountain biking. An interconnecting network of trails traversing past stream cascades, rock outcrops and high-elevation balds. Combine trails for overnight trips. Trail maps: USGS quadrangles for Big Ridge and Lake Toxaway; NG Trails Illustrated 785. Call: Nantahala District, (828) 524-6441.

Fires Creek

Near Hayesville, 19 miles of hiking trails, some also open for horse use. Remote, well-maintained trails. Check out the views and high-elevation balds along Rim Trail. Trail maps: USGS quadrangles for Andrews, Topton, Shooting Creek and Hayesville; NG Trails Illustrated 784. Call: Tusquitee District, (828) 837-5152.

WILDERNESS: where nature dominates

Eleven designated wildernesses lie within the boundaries of North Carolina's national forests. Congress sets these areas aside to:

- Preserve the natural character of the area
- Allow natural forces to dominate character of the land
- Provide opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation challenges
- Allow for undisturbed development of plants and animals and protection of their habitat.

Visiting a wilderness requires a high degree of self-reliance to participate in primitive forms of

“Where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor and does not remain.”

Wilderness Act, 1964

recreation such as hiking, backpacking, hunting and fishing. To maintain wilderness' primeval character: motorized and mechanized equipment are prohibited; trails are generally designated only for foot travel; and trails have a limited number of signs and are minimally maintained. Some equestrian trails are offered

in Southern Nantahala and Shining Rock Wildernesses.

Certain requirements exist in wildernesses. Group size is limited to a maximum of 10 in each of the 11 wilderness areas. In Shining Rock and Middle Prong Wilderness Areas, campfires are not allowed; pack a backpack stove for cooking. In Linville Gorge Wilderness Area, permits are required for camping on Fridays, Saturdays and holidays from May 1 to Oct. 31. Permits are available up to one month in advance of stay. For permits, see Grandfather District on back page. For details, see www.wilderness.net.

Blue Valley

Near Highlands, eight miles of hiking trails, including a portion of Bartram National Recreation Trail. The trail system crosses through side slopes of Blue Valley, across small streams and offering views of Glen Falls. Popular fishing area. Trail maps: Bartram Trail; NG Trails Illustrated 785. Call: Nantahala District, (828) 524-6441.

Shelton Laurel

Near Hot Springs, 33 miles of hiking trails, including a segment of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Remote, steep, rugged trails with waterfall views along mountain streams. Popular fishing area. Trail maps: USGS quadrangles for Greystone, White Rock and Flag Pond, Tenn., and Hot Springs; NG Trails Illustrated 782. Call: Appalachian District, (828) 682-6146.

Harper Creek

Near Linville, 39 miles of hiking trails connect a series of loops to Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail. Well-marked trails pass waterfalls and travel along ridgetops. Views of Lost Cove cliffs. Trail maps: NG Trails Illustrated 779. Call: Grandfather District, (828) 652-2144.

Cheoah Bald

Near Robbinsville, 13 miles of hiking trails and sections of Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Bartram National Recreation Trail. Offers good remote backpacking experience, high-elevation views, grassy balds and cascades. Popular for fishing and wildlife viewing. Trail maps: Appalachian Trail, Bartram Trail; USGS quadrangles for Hewitt and Topton; NG Trails Illustrated 784. Call: Cheoah District, (828) 479-6431.

Snowbird

Near Robbinsville, 36 miles of difficult hiking trails. Offer remote, rugged trails that provide loops connecting Snowbird Creek with ridgetops of Snowbird Mountain and Cherohala Skyway. Trail maps: Snowbird Backcountry; NG Trails Illustrated 784. Call: Cheoah District, (828) 479-6431.

WHERE TO BUY MAPS

The following maps are sold at Forest Service offices and local outfitter stores:

- National Forests in North Carolina maps
- National forest off-highway vehicle maps
- Appalachian Trail, Bartram and other trail system maps
- Backcountry areas and wildernesses
- North Carolina series of National Geographic/Trails Illustrated

Ride your horse on forest trails

by Delce Dyer

Got a horse? You can explore miles of forest roads and trails in North Carolina's national forests. If you like camping with your horse, several places offer camps with trails nearby.

Badin Lake vicinity: In Uwharrie National Forest, the 40-mile Badin Lake trail system offers multiday horseback-riding opportunities. You can park for day rides in the field beside Badin Horse Camp off Mullinix Road. Just off the trail system, Canebrake Horse Camp provides overnight facilities for you and your horse. The most developed horse camp in the North Carolina's national forests, Canebrake offers showers, restrooms, electrical hookups and a horse-washing station. Single sites are \$12 per night.

Barnardsville vicinity: In Pisgah National Forest's Big Ivy area, high-elevation trails form 16 miles of interconnecting loops. Spend the night at one of 10 designated dispersed campsites along Forest Road 74.

Brevard vicinity: The Trace Ridge area of Pisgah National Forest, located between North Mills River and the Cradle of Forestry, offers numerous designated horse trails and forest roads for multiday rides. Wash Creek Group Camp, five miles northeast of North Mills River Recreation Area, accommodates up to 35 people and 15 vehicles for \$35 per night. To reserve the site, call the Pisgah District at (828) 877-3265.

Bryson City vicinity: Try Tsali Recreation Area in Nantahala National Forest for an easy, scenic day ride. Each day, half of the 38 designated trail miles are open to horses and half are open to mountain bikes. Pay Tsali's daily \$2 trail-use fee per horse and rider at the trailhead. No public horse camping facilities are nearby.

Franklin vicinity: Two horse-trail complexes in Nantahala National Forest offer riding experiences at elevations above 4,000 feet. Southwest of Franklin, more than 20 miles of



Horsemen on the Uwharrie National Forest enter the Canebrake Horse Camp. PHOTO BY JULIE TRZECIAK

designated horse trails are located in the Standing Indian area. You can set up camp at Hurricane Creek for \$6 per night. Fifteen miles west of Franklin, you can ride 15 miles in the scenic Wine Spring area on designated horse trails. The adjacent Wine Spring Campground offers five sites equipped with horse-tethering areas.

Hayesville vicinity: Ride right out of Bristol Horse Camp onto a network of forest roads and 19 miles of horse trails in the Fires Creek area north of Hayesville. The camping fee at this Nantahala National Forest site is \$5 per night.

Waterville vicinity: More than 60 miles of trails and forest roads offer high-elevation riding opportunities at Pisgah National Forest's Harmon Den, northeast of Interstate 40 and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The 10 campsites at Harmon Den Horse Camp accommodate up to four horses each. Each site has a horse stall, and water and restrooms are available. The cost is \$15 per night for a site. To make reservations, go to www.recreation.gov or call (877) 444-6777.

HORSE SENSE

Horses can be hard on the trails, trees and land. Here are some simple ways to reduce impacts.

- To protect water quality, keep horses at least 100 feet from water.
- Stay on designated horse trails. To prevent erosion, don't shortcut trails.
- To tether your horse, use a tree-saver strap tied between two trees. If no trees are near, picket or hobble your horse.
- Use weed-free feed. Scatter manure, pick up trash and fill in pawed holes. Ensure campfires are dead out.
- Share the trail. Riders should yield to motorized vehicles, but hikers and bikers should yield to you. Say hello, and give them instructions about where to wait while you pass.
- A horse crossing a state line is required to have a negative Coggins test within the last year.
- Before leaving, clean campsites and hitching-post areas, throw away all trash in receptacles, and make sure all fires are dead out.

WOOD RUN TRAILS a biking adventure in NC's Piedmont

by Julie Trzeciak

Twenty-two miles of trails that run over rolling hills and meander through pine and hardwood forests make the Wood Run Trails a perfect mountain biking getaway.

These easy to challenging trails are located off NC 24/27 between Albemarle and Troy in the Uwharrie National Forest. Wood Run is two miles east of the bridge over Lake Tillery and the Pee Dee River.

Named after the stream, Wood Run, the trail system starts at the NC 24/27 trailhead. The gravel Wood Run Road (FR 517), the longest trail, travels 11 miles roundtrip. Two other trails intersect with Wood Run Road for additional challenges and loop opportunities.

Passing near Dutchman's Creek and Wood Run is the five-mile Supertree Trail, which connects to Wood Run Road, 1.75 miles from the parking lot. For more single-track downhill, ride this easy-to-moderate trail clockwise.

Beginning at the second trailhead, 1.4 miles from the NC 24/27 parking lot, is the six-mile Keyauwee Trail, rated as difficult. Ride this loop counterclockwise for more single-track downhill rides.

The Wood Run Trails offer views of wildlife and brightly colored

wildflowers. Deer graze in fields, wild turkeys may scurry across the trails and yellow-orange tanagers perch in trees.

The trails are bordered with a variety of wildflowers—pink mountain laurel blooms in the spring while yellow sunflowers and purple asters show their vivid colors along roadsides in the summer.

Because part of this trail complex was developed as logging roads, bikers may sporadically see trucks hauling wood. In the future, the Forest Service will build new routes that move mountain bike trails off these forest roads.

"These bike trail relocations will decrease conflicts among users," said Terry Savery, recreation staff for the Uwharrie National Forest.

"In rerouting portions of the Trail System, we're working with Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association and the International Mountain Biking Association," said Savery. "Thanks to these partners and volunteers, these trail relocations will provide better bike riding experiences for all users and less impacts to the forest."

Please note: The Uwharrie and Dutchman's Creek hiking trails are not open to mountain bikes. These long-distance trails are marked with single-white or yellow-paint blazes.



Bikers ride through the forest in the Woodrun Trail System. PHOTO BY MARLA COULTHARD

Croatan NF reaps recovery rewards

Crews reconstruct picnic shelter ruined by storm

by Alice Cohen

Over the course of seven years, several hurricanes hit the Pine Cliff Day-Use Area on Neuse River, causing the river to surge and wash seven feet of its bank out to sea.

In 2002, Hurricane Gustav tore apart the original picnic shelter built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the mid-1930s. After the storm, the shoreline was armored with large boulders to decrease the risk of another storm damaging more of the area.

In addition, help to rebuild the historic picnic shelter came in 2010. Crews reconstructed the shelter in its original style, thanks to \$47,000 of recovery funds.

"The shelter reconstruction has been on our wish list for some time now. With the recovery monies, we were fortunate to be able to get it built and put folks to work," said Croatan District Ranger Lee Thornhill.

Through partnerships with the Bits and the Reigns local equestrian groups, a 16-mile horse trail system has been added to the recreation opportunities offered on the Croatan National Forests. A trailhead is under construction near Pine Cliff Day-Use Area.



Recovery monies funded the restoration of the Pine Cliff picnic shelter. PHOTO BY CLIFF NORTHROP

Additional recovery funds will improve Croatan National Forest's recreation areas and ecosystems. More than \$445,000 funded a new restroom and wastewater system at the Neuse River/Flanner's Beach Recreation Area. Biking trails were repaired at Flanners Beach and hiking trails were repaired along the Neusiok and Tideland trails, both national recreation trails. More than \$740,000 in recovery money

funded projects that improved forest health and habitat for red-cockaded woodpecker and rough-leaf loosestrife in the Croatan National Forest. To reduce deadwood and dry leaves, overgrown shrubs and dense tree seedlings, fire technicians and foresters ignited or mechanically treated more than 3,000 acres. Recovery crews thinned 480 acres of pine forest and planted 100 acres with longleaf pines.

OHV TRAIL RULES



North Carolina's national forests offer four trail systems for riding off-highway vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles, 4-wheel-drives and trail bikes.



Within these areas, you must stay on signed routes marked with symbols showing the kind of vehicle you're driving. Resist the urge to create new trails and shortcuts.



For the most fun, choose trails that match operating limitations of you and your vehicle. Most areas have maps that show trail difficulty.

Please follow these enforced forest regulations for treading lightly on the land:

- ATV and motorcycle operators must wear DOT-approved helmets and eye protection.
- Children under 8 may not operate ATVs or motorcycles. An operator under 16 must have constant supervision by adult over the age of 18.

- No passengers are allowed on ATVs, unless vehicles are designed to carry passengers.
- Unlicensed vehicles are not allowed on designated Forest Service roads.
- Spark arresters, mufflers and brakes are required for motorized vehicles.
- Alcohol is prohibited on trails, trailheads and the entire Brown Mountain area.
- Travel only on OHV designated routes. Cross-country travel is prohibited.

WHERE TO RIDE OHVs

AREA	DISTRICT CLOSEST TOWN	USER TYPE	DAILY PERMIT	SEASON PERMIT	TRAIL MILES	SEASON
Wayehutta	NANATHALA Franklin	ATV, trail bike	\$5 ✨	\$30 ★	22	April 1-Dec. 15 Daytime only
Brown Mountain	GRANDFATHER Lenoir	Mostly ATV and trail bike	\$5 ★	\$30 ★	33.5	April 1-Jan. 1
Badin Lake	UWHARRIE Troy	All: ATV, trail bike, 4WD	\$5 ★	\$30 ★	17	April 1-Dec. 15
Black Swamp	CROATAN New Bern	Less than 50-inch wheel-base ATV, trail bike	\$5 ✨	\$30 ★	8	Year-round

★ Purchase permits in advance from district offices. ✨ Passes sold on site. Local vendors sell permits for Brown Mountain and Badin Lake.

FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

CAROLINA 14 CONNECTIONS

DAY-USE & CAMPING IN THE PIEDMONT & COAST



Fees subject to change

*Reservations available at 877-444-6777, TDD: 877-833-6777 or visit: www.recreation.gov.

Call for information on opening and closing dates.

	Camping Reservations*	DUMP STATION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	SHOWERS	DRINKING WATER	BOAT RAMP	FISHING/WADING	TRAILS	Fee (\$)	# OF CAMPSITES	COMMENTS
UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST												
ARROWHEAD CAMPGROUND Open all year. From TROY, take NC 109-N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinax Rd. (SR 1154) Go 2 miles to "T" intersection, turn right. Go 2 more miles to "T" follow signs.	*		F	V						\$12* \$24	50	*\$3 electrical surcharge at single sites, \$6 double sites. 35 sites with electricity. Near boat launch. Bike, horse, OHV trails nearby. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
BADIN LAKE CAMPGROUND Open all year. Same directions as above.	*		F	V						\$12 \$24	34	Some lakeshore sites. Upper loop open mid-March to early January. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
BADIN LAKE GROUP CAMP Open all year. Same directions as ARROWHEAD.	*		F	V						\$40	3	Group size limited to 50. By reservation only. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
CANEBRAKE HORSE CAMP Open all year. From TROY, take NC 109-N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinax Rd. (SR1154) and go 2 miles to a "T" intersection and continue straight ahead. Campground is 1.4 mile on right.	*		F	V						\$12 \$24	29	Fully accessible facilities, direct access to trails. Electrical hookups at all sites. Uwharrie National Forest: 901-576-6391.
HOLTS PICNIC AREA Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinax Rd. (SR1154) and go 2 miles to a "T" intersection. Turn right & go 2 miles to "T". Right on FR 597, go 4 miles to site.			F	V						no fee		On Badin Lake. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
KINGS MOUNTAIN POINT Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinax Rd. (SR1154) and go 2 miles to a "T" intersection. Turn right on FR 597, left on FR 597A, go about 2 miles to site.			F	V						no fee		On Badin Lake. Accessible fishing piers. Paved trail circles site. Picnic shelter can be reserved. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
UWHARRIE HUNT CAMP Open all year. From TROY, take NC 109-N for 10 miles. Cross Uwharrie River, turn left at Badin Lake sign. Go 0.5 mile on right.			F	V						\$5	8	Walk-in tents sites only. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
WEST MORRIS MOUNTAIN CAMPGROUND Open all year. From TROY, take NC 109-N for 8 miles. Turn right on SR 1303. Go 1.5 miles. Camp is on right.			F	V						\$5	16	Tents or RVs. Trailhead for Uwharrie National Recreation Trail. Uwharrie National Forest: 910-576-6391.
CROATAN NATIONAL FOREST												
CEDAR POINT RECREATION AREA Open all year. From Swansboro, take NC 24E, cross White Oak River, turn left onto NC 58N, go 3.3 miles, turn left on VFW Rd. Go 0.5 mile and turn left on FR 153A at Cedar Point sign.			F	V						\$12* \$24	40	Electrical hookups at all sites. \$5 electrical surcharge. On White Oak River. Trailhead for Tideland National Recreation Trail. Croatan National Forest: 252-638-5628.
FISHERS LANDING PICNIC AREA Open all year. From NEW BERN, take U.S. 70E for about 10 miles. Turn left at sign, 0.5 mile north of national forest office.			F	V						no fee		On Neuse River. Near beach and river access. Croatan National Forest: 252-638-5628.
NEUSE RIVER/FLANNERS BEACH RECREATION AREA From NEW BERN, take US 70E about 12 miles. Travel about 2 miles south of Croatan District office, turn left on SR 1107 and go 1.5 miles.			F	V						\$12* \$24	40	Closed for construction until early summer 2011. Call to confirm opening date. On Neuse River. *\$5 surcharge for electricity, 24 sites with electricity. Croatan National Forest: 252-638-5628.
OYSTER POINT CAMPGROUND Open all year. From NEWPORT, take SR 1154 to FR 181 and turn right, Go 1.1 mile to campground on right.			F	V						\$8	15	Trailhead for Neusiok National Recreation Trail. Shallow water at canoe launch. Croatan National Forest: 252-638-5628.
PINE CLIFF PICNIC AREA Open all year. From HAVELOCK, take NC 101 for 4.7 miles to NC 306 and turn left. Go 3.2 miles to Pinecliff Rd., turn left and go 1.5 miles to parking lot.			F	V						no fee		On Neuse River. Trailhead for Neusiok National Recreation Trail. Picnic shelter. Beach and river access. Horse trails and trailhead nearby. Croatan National Forest: 252-638-5628.

DISPERSED CAMPING Unless areas have "No Camping" signs, camping is allowed in undeveloped, non-fee areas in Croatan and Uwharrie National Forests. No dispersed camping is allowed within the boundaries of day-use sites, campgrounds or most wildlife openings. Call the ranger stations for more information.

Savor nature's beauty at Cedar Point

Sitting near the mouth of the White Oak River is Cedar Point Recreation Area—a wetland of wonder where freshwater meets saltwater. Located at the Atlantic Ocean's border, Cedar Point offers a wealth of recreation, from bass fishing, hiking nearby trails, wildlife viewing, camping and boating.

Slow down to the slow rhythmic pace of Cedar Point's changing tides and savor nature's beauty: Watch a blue crab scurry across the shore, view an egret diving for fish or listen to a red-bellied woodpecker building a home.

A WETLAND ADVENTURE

HIKING: The Tideland National Recreation Trail meanders through the salt marsh and adjoins the forest. On two loop trails, hikers can travel boardwalks and smooth gravel paths.

The half-mile loop crosses the salt marsh and follows its edge. Interpretive signs tell the story of how this living community changes with the tide's ebb and flow. The short loop is level and wide enough for wheelchairs. Skirting the edge



PHOTOS BY PAT MOMICH
LEFT: A great blue heron scopes the White River for jumping fish. ABOVE: a blue crab travels through salt water and sand. Visitors may also spot fiddler crabs and belted kingfishers.

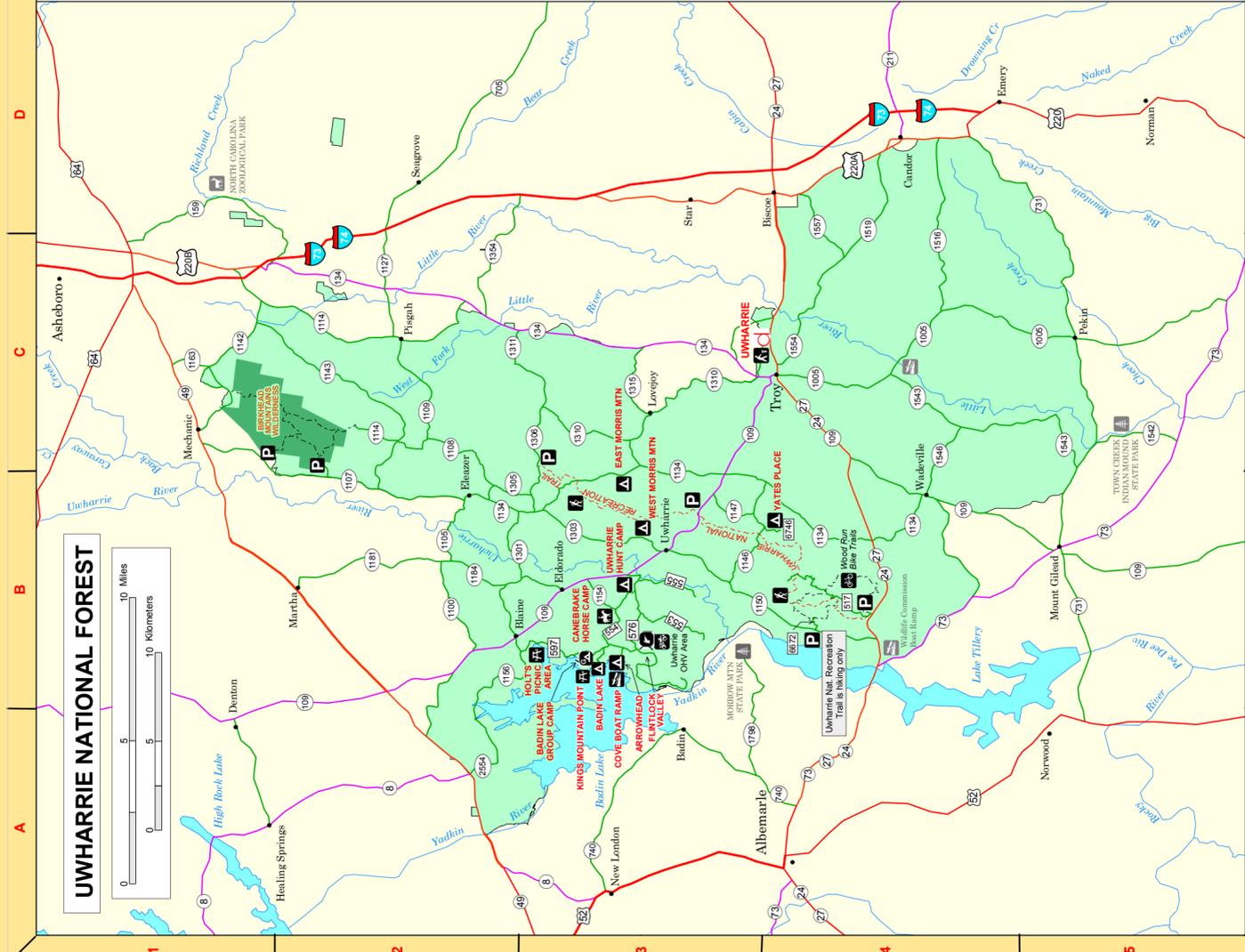
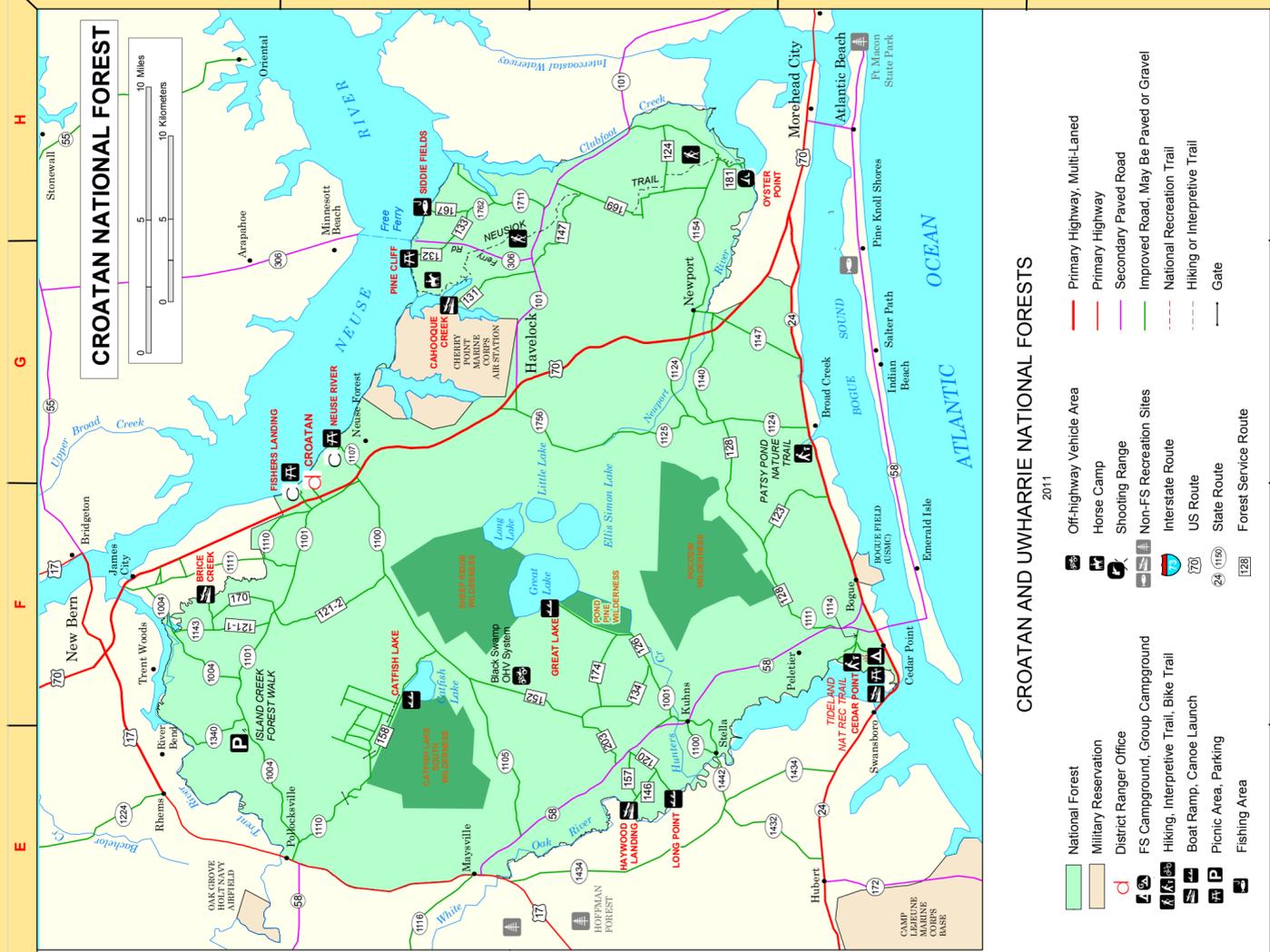
of the White Oak River, the 1.3-mile loop winds over the marsh through woods.

CAMPING: The Cedar Point Campground offers 40 nicely spaced campsites with electrical hookups and accessible restrooms with showers.

BOATING AND FISHING: A small-craft boat ramp and fishing pier provide easy access

to the river. The shallow water is suited to flat-bottomed boats, while canoes and kayaks can navigate the maze of canals through salt marsh.

WILDLIFE WATCHING: Take the time to watch herds of fiddler crabs scuttling back and forth from the water's edge. Be alert for egrets, deer, jumping fish and other wildlife.



CROATAN AND UWHARRIE NATIONAL FORESTS 2011

- National Forest
- Military Reservation
- District Ranger Office
- FS Campground, Group Campground
- Hiking, Interpretive Trail, Bike Trail
- Boat Ramp, Canoe Launch
- Picnic Area, Parking
- Fishing Area
- Off-highway Vehicle Area
- Horse Camp
- Shooting Range
- Non-FS Recreation Sites
- Interstate Route
- US Route
- State Route
- Forest Service Route
- Primary Highway, Multi-Laned
- Primary Highway
- Improved Road, May Be Paved or Gravel
- National Recreation Trail
- Hiking or Interpretive Trail
- Gate

Forest Service restores pine ecosystems

by Alice Cohen

Beyond the view of trees enjoyed on a drive through the forest or the smell of pine experienced along a trail is a complex web of natural systems that makes each forest unique. In North Carolina's Piedmont and Coastal Plain, the U.S. Forest Service and numerous other forest managers are working to restore the longleaf pine woodlands and savannas.

Longleaf Pine: the savannah jewel

Longleaf pine is considered one of the most distinctive and important southern conifers. This tree grows to a height of 80- to 120-feet and a diameter of 2.5 feet, maturing at around 150 years of age. The pine bears bunches of 8- to 18-inch needles that appear as soft tufts from a distance. The longleaf's cones are 6-to 10-inches long — the longest of any southern pine. The cones house nuts that are a favorite food for wild turkey and fox squirrels. The wood is prized for shipbuilding and products such as varnish.

Pines offer homes to endangered species

The Croatan's pine savannas are scattered with pine trees, and wiregrass dominates the forest floor. The ecosystem offers prime habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and rough-leaf loosestrife, an endangered plant that is native to this ecosystem.

"In 2010 we made progress toward longleaf pine restoration in the Croatan National Forest," said Lee Thornhill, Croatan National Forest ranger. "We used prescribed burns as a tool to reduce fuel buildup on the forest floor, thereby decreasing wildfire's intensity." Fire-dependent longleaf pine ecosystems evolved with natural fires occurring every one to three years,



ABOVE: Future longleaf generations thrive under an open canopy amid morning mist and wiregrass.

which enhance the forest's health. After prescribed fires, the forest is healthier, decreasing the potential for future destructive fires and creating a safer environment for communities surrounding the forest.

Longleaf pines withstand beetle attacks, wildfire

Replanting with longleaf pine rather than other native pine species increases fire-resistance. Last year, crews removed competing plants around young longleaf pines on 72 acres. In addition, longleaf seedlings were planted on 100 acres where many trees had been killed by tornados and infestations of southern pine bark beetle. The southern pine bark beetle is the most destructive insect pest in southern forests. Native to these forests, this beetle can reach



LEFT: Beneath the longleaf pine, this Venus flytrap waits to catch the next traveling insect. The endangered rough-leaf loosestrife also grows near the pine.

epidemic populations if the forests are too dense, damaged or weak. Longleaf pines are less susceptible to infestations because they are better at "pitching out" beetles.

"Over the next three years, we're planning longleaf pine habitat restoration through prescribed

burning, thinning and replanting," said Thornhill. "These activities will also focus on red-cockaded woodpecker and rough-leaf loosestrife and will occur on 3,000 acres across the Croatan National Forest." Starting in 2014, longleaf restoration is slated on an additional 1,000 acres each year.

Photos by Bill Lea

<p>NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH CAROLINA Supervisor's Office 160A Zillicoa Street Asheville, NC 28801 828-257-4200 (Take UNCA exit 25 off I-26, go toward UNCA to first right) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Pisgah Ranger District 1001 Pisgah Highway Pisgah Forest, NC 28768 828-877-3265 (On U.S. 276 north of Brevard) Nov.-Mid-May 23: Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. May 24 -Oct: Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat. & holidays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun., 1-5 p.m.</p>		<p>Pisgah National Forest</p> <p>Nantahala National Forest</p> <p>Uwharrie National Forest</p>	<p>CROATAN NATIONAL FOREST 141 E. Fisher Avenue New Bern, NC 28560 252-638-5628 (On U.S. 70 South of New Bern) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p> <p>UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST 789 NC 24/27 East Troy, NC 27371 910-576-6391 (2 miles east of Troy on NC 24/27) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>
<p>PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST Appalachian Ranger District Burnsville Unit 30 East Hwy., 19 Bypass Burnsville, NC 28714 828-682-6146 (On U.S. 19-E bypass in Burnsville) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST Cheoah Ranger District 1070 Massey Branch Road Robbinsville, NC 28771 828-479-6431 (Take U.S. 129 north of Robbinsville to NC 143, turn left & go about one mile) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Nantahala Ranger District 90 Sloan Road Franklin, NC 28734 828-524-6441 (Turn at light on U.S. 64, west of Franklin) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>CROATAN NATIONAL FOREST 141 E. Fisher Avenue New Bern, NC 28560 252-638-5628 (On U.S. 70 South of New Bern) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST 789 NC 24/27 East Troy, NC 27371 910-576-6391 (2 miles east of Troy on NC 24/27) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Grandfather Ranger District 109 East Lawing Drive Nebo, NC 28761 828-652-2144 (Off I-40, Nebo/Lake James Exit) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Tusquitee Ranger District 123 Woodland Drive Murphy, NC 28906 828-837-5152 (Turn off U.S. 64 on Hiwassee Street in front of BB&T bank. Go two blocks to sign.) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Nantahala Ranger District 90 Sloan Road Franklin, NC 28734 828-524-6441 (Turn at light on U.S. 64, west of Franklin) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>CROATAN NATIONAL FOREST 141 E. Fisher Avenue New Bern, NC 28560 252-638-5628 (On U.S. 70 South of New Bern) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST 789 NC 24/27 East Troy, NC 27371 910-576-6391 (2 miles east of Troy on NC 24/27) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</p>

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