

National Forests in North Carolina
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NEWS RELEASE

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Forest Service and Partners Take Strategic Approach to Managing Trails

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – The USDA Forest Service National Forests in North Carolina today announced that it will host multiple workshops next year to address management of non-motorized recreation trails across the Nantahala, Pisgah, Uwharrie, and Croatan National Forests.

“Referred to as the Non-motorized Trails Strategy, this effort gives partners the opportunity to identify sustainable forest trail systems,” said Forest Supervisor Marisue Hilliard. “I believe this initiative will produce high-quality trail systems that will better serve our visitors and the land.”

Public workshops for Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest trails start in early January 2012. The Uwharrie and Croatan National Forests meetings start in summer 2012. A complete list of meeting dates and times is posted at: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nctrailstrategy.

Representatives from a wide range of trail-user groups, individuals who represent local communities and ecotourism, or individuals not represented by larger user groups are invited to collaborate in the process, which is expected to take up to a year to complete. The result will be recommendations for a comprehensive trail management plan for each national forest in North Carolina, along with a stronger community of volunteers to assist with these efforts.

The Forest Service initiated this process because use of forest trails in North Carolina is increasing every year. Resources used to maintain trails have been static or decreasing. The emphasis will be on high-quality experiences on sustainable trail systems.

Through this process, the Forest Service and users will work together to look at the trail systems and recommend how to make the best use of current and future resources. The agency will use information generated from this process for the Nantahala/Pisgah National Forests Management Plan revision slated to start in 2013.

The National Forests in North Carolina includes 1.25 million acres of public lands, more than 1600 miles of non-motorized trails and nearly five million visitors per year, making it one of the most visited forests in the nation. For more information on the Trail Strategy, visit: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nctrailstrategy.