

# Lands, Special Uses Minerals and Energy



## Lands Findings

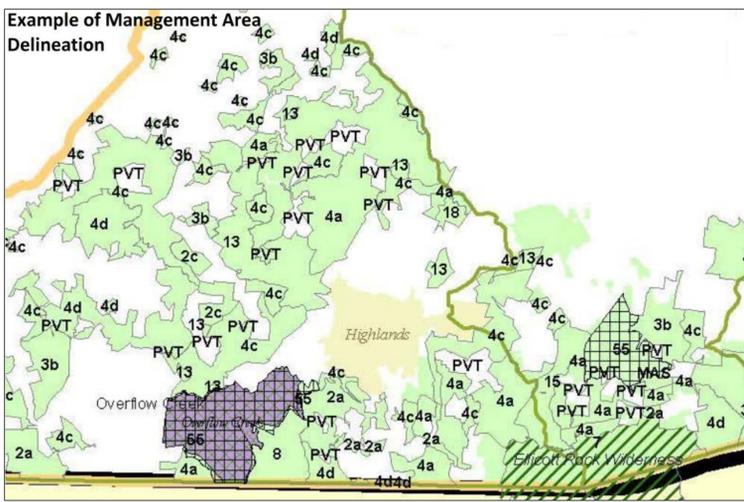
- Over 17,000 acres have been added to Nantahala and Pisgah NFs in the past 20 years, making the total acres approximately 1,044,393.
- Only 58% of the Nantahala and Pisgah boundary line are marked, which is one factor making title claims, trespass and encroachment issues rampant.
- Management Area boundaries from the 1987 Plan are based largely on accessibility, terrain, historic use, and special features; they did not necessarily coincide with resource management needs.

## Special Uses Findings

- There are 1,191 special use permits currently in place on the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. Road easements and outfitter guide permits are the most numerous of the special use permits.
- Potential increase in demand for festivals, trail-riding events, and other special uses could affect other users' ability to recreate in the affected areas .

## Minerals and Energy Findings

- The Forest has a variety of potential mineral resources. Currently there is one inactive hardrock mineral federal lease, one active federal mineral material permit, and one active private mineral right operation. The State is in process of assessing oil and gas potential in western North Carolina.
- Most of the subsurface is in government ownership . Private mineral rights may exist on up to 10% of the subsurface, but the complexities of state law make it difficult to determine without legal opinion.
- 1987 Plan direction for recreational gem and mineral collecting is unclear, leading to confusion among forest managers, laws enforcement, and the public.



# What does the 1987 Plan say?

## Lands

- The plan provides criteria for land acquisition; protection within wilderness is the top priority. Lands acquired since 1994 have not been assigned to a management area, as the 1987 Plan did not provide clear direction for how to treat newly acquired land.
- Direction is to mark Forest property lines so they are visible for public and administrative needs; and to perform maintenance on all surveyed property boundary lines at least every ten years.
- The 1987 Plan identifies 21 Management Areas, each with a different mix of multiple-uses emphasized and some variation in direction and standards for management.

## Special Uses

- “Approve no special uses that can reasonably be met on private lands unless they are clearly in the public interest. First priority is for public safety, health and welfare such as highways powerlines and public service improvements.”
- “Allow recreational events when they meet management area direction.”

## Minerals and Energy

- “If consent is given to mineral leasing, stipulations would include no surface occupancy, seasonal and size limitations, and special rehabilitation measures.”
- “Restrict recreational mineral collection to nonmechanical equipment with no significant ground and stream disturbance.”