

Vegetation



Findings

1. Historical land-use has had a profound effect on the current vegetation found on the Nantahala and Pisgah NFs.
2. Young forest is underrepresented within the majority of the ecozones.
3. In many ecozones the herbaceous and woody understory conditions don't resemble pre European settlement conditions in composition, abundance, or structure nor do they resemble the current overstory.
4. Forests within the 11 ecozones generally have greater canopy cover and shrub density than forests prior to 20th century logging and fire suppression.
5. Restoration opportunities abound but the degree of complexity varies widely across management areas and ecozones.



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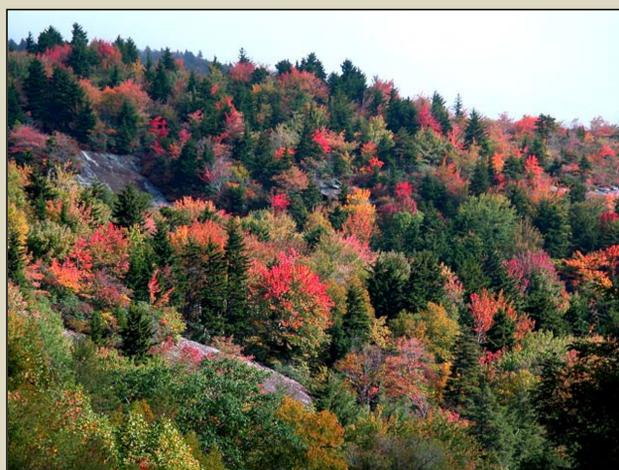
1. Prescribed burning has increased across many of the fire adapted ecozones however is not frequent enough to affect its overall composition and structure.
2. There are a variety of non-native invasive diseases, pests, and plants currently impacting or potentially threatening forests within the two forests; risks of invasion varies by ecozone.
3. The most threatened unique habitat groups are Southern Appalachian bogs and grassy balds.
4. There are few active management activities implemented to enhance desirable non-timber forest products such as American ginseng, black cohosh, Galax or ramps.



What does the 1987 Plan say



1. The 1987 Plan specifies rehabilitation of ecosystems damaged by past land use.
2. The 1987 Plan young forest (0-10 year age class) goals do not differ by different forest communities. Young forest goals are specific to the suitable timber base (management areas 1B, 2A, 3B, 4A, & 4D) but silent in other management areas.
3. The 1987 Plan suggests management mimics natural disturbance patterns. It targets restoration of mast bearing species but is not specific in restoring overstory and understory conditions.
4. Structural and composition goals across the forest are general in the 1987 Plan.
5. The 1987 Plan targets activities in the suitable timber management areas, making it more difficult to restore habitats in the non-suitable base.



What does the 1987 Plan say



1. The 1987 Plan indicates prescribed fire be used for creation and maintenance of desired vegetation, fuel reduction, and site preparation. Desired conditions are not separated by different forest communities. The plan does not address different fire frequency needs for restoration or maintenance within different forest communities.
2. The 1987 Plan recommends integrated pest management for treatment of pests, however it only specifically addresses southern pine beetle, a native insect pest.
3. The 1987 Plan addresses management activities for grassy balds, however fails to specifically address restoration goals for bogs.
4. The Plan allows collection of selected non-timber forest products with issuance of a permit. There are no specific goals to manage for this resource.

