

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE
NATIONAL FOREST OF NORTH CAROLINA
PISGAH AND NANTAHALA NATIONAL FORESTS**

ORDER NO. 08-11-00-25-02

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b), the following acts are prohibited within the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests in the Western District of North Carolina in caves and mines within the area shown on the attached map. This closure is effective from the date signed by the Forest Supervisor until December 31, 2035 or until terminated by an authorized Forest Service official, whichever occurs first.

1. Entering any cave or abandoned manmade underground structure, commonly referred to as a "mine". 36 CFR 261.53(a) (b) &(e) – for the protection of threatened, endangered, rare, unique, or vanishing species. Protection of special biological communities. And for public health and safety.

The term "cave" means any naturally occurring void, cavity, recess, or system of interconnected passages which occurs beneath the surface of the earth or within a cliff or ledge (including any cave resource therein, but not including any vug, mine, tunnel, aqueduct, or other manmade excavation) and which is large enough to permit an individual to enter, whether or not the entrance is naturally formed or manmade. Such term shall include any natural pit, sinkhole, or other feature which is an extension of the entrance (Federal Cave Resources Protection Act, 16 USC § 4302(1)).

The above prohibition applies to areas shown on attached map within the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e) the following persons are exempt from the above prohibitions:

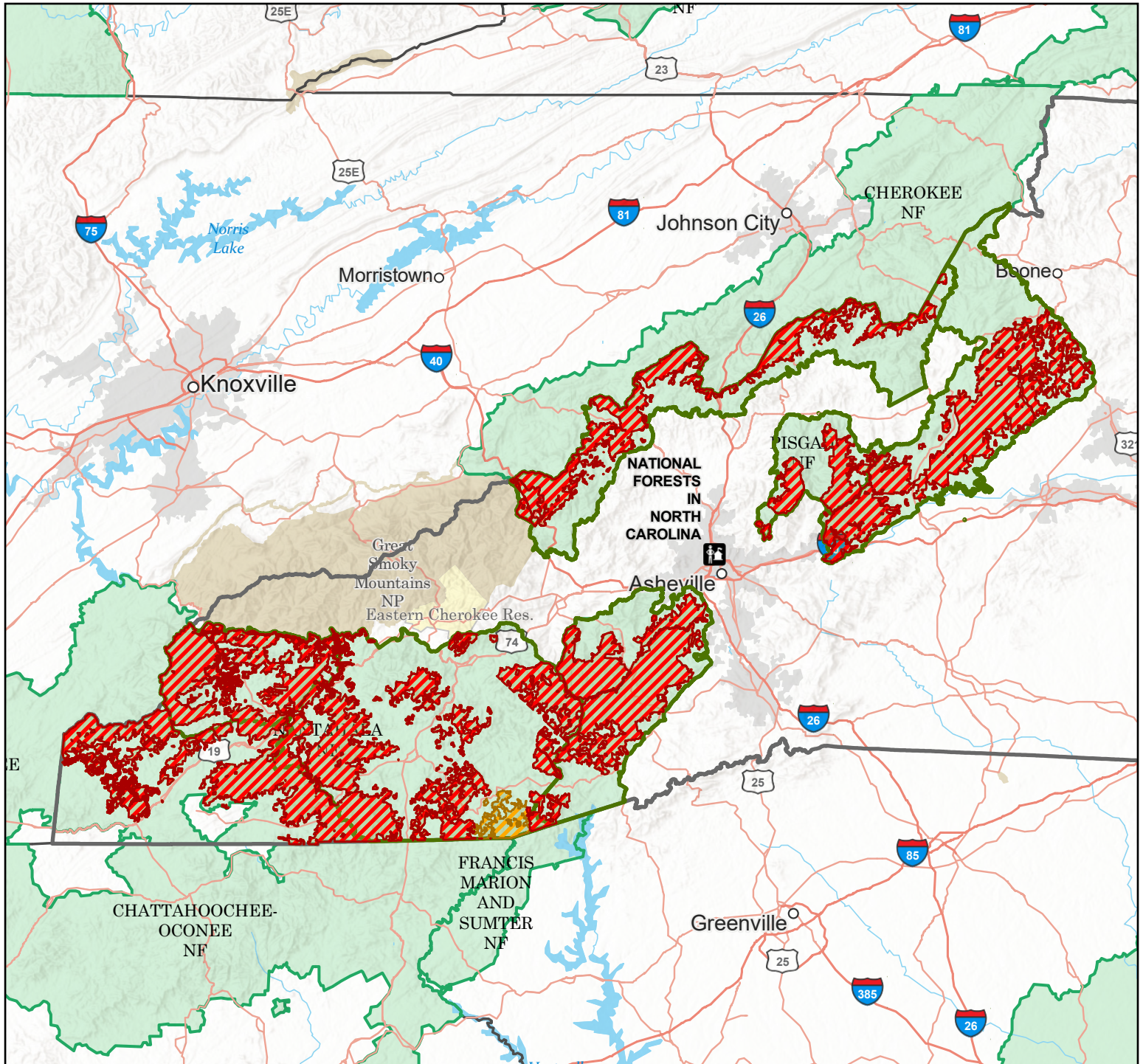
1. Any persons with written authorization or permit by a District Ranger or Forest Supervisor specifically authorizing an otherwise prohibited act or omission. Authorization or permit must be on person at all times while within closure area.
2. Any Federal, State, or local Forest Officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of their official duty.
3. Persons engaged in any of the following activities which have been authorized in writing by a permit, contract, or agreement:
 - a. Mineral use, 36 C.F.R. Part 228 (36 C.F.R. §§ 228.1 – 228.116);

Executed in North Carolina this 11th day of September, 2025.



James Melonas
Forest Supervisor
National Forests in
North Carolina

A violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571 and 3581.



Content Advisory

This map is intended to depict physical features as they generally appear on the ground and may not be used to determine title, ownership, legal boundaries, legal jurisdiction, including jurisdiction over roads or trails, or access restrictions that may be in place on either public or private land. Obtain permission before entering private lands, and check with appropriate government offices for restrictions that may apply to public lands. Lands, roads and trails within the boundaries of the National Forest may be subject to restrictions on motor vehicle use. Obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map, or inquire at the local Forest Service Office for motor vehicle access information. Natural hazards may or may not be depicted on the map, and land users should exercise due caution. This map may not be suitable for navigational use.

0 10 20 40
Miles

Legend

-  Cave & Mine Closure
-  Mine Only Closure

***Through hiking on designated trails is permitted.**

All mines and caves within the designated closure areas are not open to the public.

