The following document is the Implementation Plan for the Lower Chattooga Implementation Area on the Chattooga River Ranger District. This plan outlines all proposed actions within the Implementation Area.

The first table of this document titled "**Plan Summary**" has all the proposed activities for the area. The second table titled "**Activates Implementable from Final DN**" documents all those activities that are implementable from the Decision Notice.

Activities listed on the third and fourth tables labeled "**Commercial Activities (May only occur in MRx suitable for timber production per selected Alternative (Alt 3))**" and "**Non-Commercial Action(s)**" respectively, are collaborative proposed activities. These are that actions that the Forest is seeking input from the Foothills Collaborative Group on

Foothills Landscape Project Implementation Plan

Implementation Area: Lower Chattooga
Ranger District: Chattooga River
Date: October 29, 2025

Instructions: Use the tables and template(s) that follow to summarize all actions to be implemented within the IA; drafted during Step 3 and finalized during Step 8. The Plan Summary table should list all activities selected from the checklists below, with each activity described in detail in the section that follows. When completing all project information, ensure all information is sufficient and relevant to provide a full and detailed project description. The summary table below can be used to quickly track the number of projects within the IA and the acres or miles of disturbance impacts.

Plan Summary

Activity Name (should correspond w/ Table 17 of EA)	**Location (i.e., HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)**	**Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.**	**Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.**	**Anticipated year(s) implementation would begin**
Canebrake restoration	Lower Stekoa Creek: Comp 59 Stands 46, 47	15 acres		2027-2032
Restoration of southern yellow pine forest on dry sites dominated by mid to late-successional Virginia or white pine	2 Aged Regen Harvest – Restore Shortleaf/Pitch: Comp 59 Stands 8, 21, 28 Comp 62 Stand 14 Comp 66 Stands 1, 3 Comp 67 Stand 26	217 acres		2027-2037
Restoration of southern yellow pine forest or oak forest on sites currently occupied by off-site pine plantations (loblolly or white pine) or failed shortleaf or pitch pine plantations	2 Aged Regen Harvest – Restore Shortleaf/Pitch: Comp 60 Stands 6, 18 Comp 61 Stands 14, 17 Comp 62 Stands 2, 11 Comp 63 Stand 2 Comp 64 Stands 21, 24 Comp 67 Stands 14, 16, 19 Comp 68 Stand 20	467 acres		2027-2037

	2 Aged Regen Harvest – Restore Oak: Comp 60 Stand 15 Comp 61 Stand 12 Comp 62 Stand 36	109 acres		2027-2037
Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest	Commercial Thinning: Comp 59 Stands 15, 29, 41, 47 Comp 60 Stands 4, 12, 17, 23 Comp 61 Stands 1, 2, 6, 22 Comp 62 Stand 32 Comp 63 Stands 16, 36 Comp 64 Stands 3, 32 Comp 66 Stand 15 Comp 67 Stands 17, 24, 29 Comp 68 Stands 7, 12, 25, 28, 30, 31	1,033 acres		2027-2037
	Expanding Gap: Comp 60 Stands 10, 21 Comp 63 Stands 4, 7, 15, 21 Comp 64 Stands 20, 34 Comp 66 Stand 25	211 acres		2027-2037
Maintenance of oak forest	Commercial Thinning: Comp 59 Stands 3, 14, 17, 23, 27, 48 Comp 60 Stands 24, 29, 32 Comp 61 Stand 5 Comp 63 Stand 1 Comp 64 Stands 4, 16 Comp 66 Stands 12, 18 Comp 67 Stand 40	811 acres		2027-2037
	Mid-story Reduction: Comp 55 Stand 20 Comp 59 Stands 11, 13, 30, 33, 36 Comp 60 Stand 22 Comp 61 Stands 3, 4, 7, 8 Comp 62 Stands 4, 13, 31, 33, 46 Comp 66 Stand 24	533 acres		2027-2037
	Expanding Gap: Comp 62 Stand 40 Comp 63 Stands 8, 38 Comp 64 Stands 33 Comp 66 Stand 20	256 acres		2027-2037

	Comp 66 Stand 22			
	Crown-touching Release: Comp 63 Stand 32 Comp 64 Stand 2 Comp 66 Stand 9 Comp 68 Stand 16	125 acres		2027-2037
Commercial and non-commercial thinning of pine plantations to improve forest health	Commercial Thinning: Comp 55 Stands 11, 30, 36 Comp 59 Stands 19, 24 Comp 60 Stands 13, 16 Comp 61 Stands 9, 11 Comp 62 Stands 3, 8, 9, 29 Comp 63 Stand 11 Comp 67 Stand 34 Comp 68 Stands 13, 26, 27	746 acres		2027-2037
	Non-Commercial Thinning: Comp 55 Stand 35 Comp 60 Stands 20, 30 Comp 64 Stands 13, 29 Comp 66 Stand 14 Comp 68 Stand 29	219 acres		2027-2037
Create young forest (ESH) by daylighting roads and permanent openings	**Road Daylighting:** 8.2 miles, Comps 59, 60, 61, 62, 63 **Permanent WLO Daylighting:** 5 WLOs Comps 61, 62	Road Daylighting: 62 acres WLO Daylighting: 10 acres		2027-2037
Restoring open woodland habitats on appropriate sites	Commercial Thinning: Comp 62 Stands 5, 7, 10, 30, 44, 48 Comp 68 Stands 8, 10, 17, 19, 21	599 acres		2027-2037
Create or expand permanent openings	**Expand Permanent WLOs:** 5 WLOs, Comps 61, 62	10 acres		2027-2037
Prescribed fire in new burn blocks to facilitate restoration or maintenance of fire-adapted ecosystems or to reduce hazardous fuels	**Bad Creek Cooperative Rx:** Comps 68, 67 **Camp Creek Rx:** Comp 67 **Cutting Bone Rx:** Comps 59, 60, 61, 62 **Raven Rock Rx:** Comp 67 **Rocky Mountain Rx:** Comp 66 **Sockem Dog Rx:** Comp 67 **Stekoa Creek Rx:** Comps 59, 61, 62	**Bad Creek Cooperative:** 437 acres **Camp Creek:** 356 acres **Cutting Bone:** 803 acres **Raven Rock:** 771 acres **Rocky Mountain:** 722 acres **Sockem Dog:** 507 acres		2026-2037

	Stone Place Rx: Comp 68 **Stroud Mountain Rx:** Comp 55 **Wolf Creek Rx:** Comps 61, 62 **Woodall Shoals Rx:** Comp 59	**Stekoa Creek:** 570 acres **Stone Place:** 646 acres **Stroud Mountain:** 112 acres **Wolf Creek:** 119 acres **Woodall Shoals:** 1565 acres		
Decommissioning of maintenance level (ML) 2 and ML1 system roads	FSR - 511B Comp 62	0.5 mile		2026
Implement changes to system road ML and/or use restrictions	FSR - 14: Comp 55 FSR - 825A: Comp 62 FSR - 825B**:** Comps 63, 64 FSR - 8: Comp 64 FSR - 84: Comp 67 FSR - 429**:** Comp 68	FSR - 14: 0.7 mile FSR - 825A: 0.5 mile FSR - 825B: 0.8 mile FSR - 8: 1.4 miles FSR - 84: 0.8 mile FSR - 429**:** 0.9 mile		2027-2037
Reconstruction of existing roads that are causing sedimentation to streams	FSR - 8: Comp 64	1.4 miles		2027-2037

Activities Implementable from Final DN: Select all that apply. See Table 17 in the EA for full description of action and connected actions.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☐	Bog improvement actions including hydrologic restoration and removal of encroaching vegetation (may include commercial treatment)	Raise stream profiles by filling or plugging ditches Removing encroaching vegetation by commercial, non-commercial harvest	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☒	Canebrake restoration actions including overstory removal (may include commercial treatment)	Removing encroaching vegetation by commercial, non-commercial harvest	**Lower Stekoa Creek:** Comp 59 Stands 46, 47	15 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Small-whorled pogonia improvement actions including experimental canopy and midstory removal	Non-commercial thinning or hand clearing	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Non-commercial release of hemlock trees to decrease susceptibility of hemlock to hemlock woody adelgid outside of HCAs	Individual tree release, non-commercial thinning	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Designate small blocks of old growth	Allocate small blocks of old growth stands that are arranged in mosaics and connected by other habitat types	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Stream habitat improvements	Add large woody debris to stream channels through cut and leave operations (mechanical and non-mechanical) Maintain and enhance existing in-stream structures Stabilize streambanks	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Continuation of prescribed burning within existing burn blocks	Prescribed burning during dormant and/or early growing season on a recurring basis	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Decommissioning of maintenance level (ML) 2 and ML1 system roads	Close road/trail to public; may include full obliteration of roadbed, removal of stream crossing fills/ culverts with restoration of channel, crushing and burying inlets, seeding, fertilizing, mulching, drainage improvements, scattering slash, etc.	**FSR - 511B:** Comp 62	0.5 mile	Click or tap here to enter text.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☒	Implement changes to system road ML and/or use restrictions	Reduce ML in system roads, including seasonal closure in some roads Update MVUM	**FSR - 14:** Comp 55 **FSR - 825A:** Comp 62 **FSR - 825B:** Comps 63, 64 **FSR - 8:** Comp 64 **FSR - 84:** Comp 67 **FSR - 429:** Comp 68	**FSR - 14:** 0.7 mile **FSR - 825A:** 0.5 mile **FSR - 825B:** 0.8 mile **FSR - 8:** 1.4 miles **FSR - 84:** 0.8 mile **FSR - 429:** 0.9 mile	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Implement changes to system road ML and/or use restrictions	Increase ML, pave road, install safety features, improve drainage (NFSR 18, Holly Creek)	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Reconstruction of existing roads that are causing sedimentation to streams, particularly within watersheds with 305b and 303d listed streams	Widen curves Upgrade culverts Harden or repair low-water stream crossings Upgrade or reconstruct drainage features, spot reconstruction if needed Upgrade surface material and configuration using Georgia BMPs	**FSR - 8:** Comp 64	1.4 miles	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Decommission a section of Tatum Lead motorized trail and Milma Creek OHV trails	Close trail to public; may include full obliteration of roadbed, removal of stream crossing fills/ culverts with restoration of channel, crushing and burying inlets, seeding, fertilizing, mulching, drainage improvements, scattering slash, etc.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Convert the Tibbs All-Terrain vehicle (ATV) trail and a section of Milma Creek OHV trail back to a system road	Administratively convert a section of the trail back to a system road	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Convert the Rocky Flats OHV trail back to a system road	Administratively convert a section of the trail back to a system road	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Decommission low-use trails (Murray's Lake Trail and Peeples Lake Trail)	Administrative removal of trails from system Update maps	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☐	Decommission Boggs Creek developed campground	Administratively decommission campground	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Decommission Oakey Mountain developed campground	Close to public; remove all infrastructure (may include full obliteration of infrastructure), hardened surfaces, seeding, fertilizing, mulching, drainage improvements, scattering slash, etc.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Commercial Activities (May only occur in MRx suitable for timber production per selected Alternative (Alt 3)): Select all that apply. See Table 17 in the EA for full description of action and connected actions.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☒	Restoration of southern yellow pine forest on dry sites dominated by mid to late-successional Virginia or white pine	Two aged regeneration harvest	Comp 59 Stands 8, 21, 28 Comp 62 Stand 14 Comp 66 Stands 1, 3 Comp 67 Stand 26	217 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Restoration of southern yellow pine forest or oak forest on sites currently occupied by off-site pine plantations (loblolly or white pine) or failed shortleaf or pitch pine plantations	Two-aged regeneration harvest	**Restore Shortleaf/Pitch:** Comp 60 Stands 6, 18 Comp 61 Stands 14, 17 Comp 62 Stands 2, 11 Comp 63 Stand 2 Comp 64 Stands 21, 24 Comp 67 Stands 14, 16, 19 Comp 68 Stand 20 **Restore Oak:** Comp 60 Stand 15 Comp 61 Stand 12 Comp 62 Stand 36	**Restore Shortleaf/ Pitch:** 467 acres **Restore Oak:** 109 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest	Commercial thinning	Comp 59 Stands 15, 29, 41, 47 Comp 60 Stands 4, 12, 17, 23 Comp 61 Stands 1, 2, 6, 22 Comp 62 Stand 32 Comp 63 Stands 16, 36 Comp 64 Stands 3, 32 Comp 66 Stand 15 Comp 67 Stands 17, 24, 29 Comp 68 Stands 7, 12, 25, 28, 30, 31	1,033 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☒	Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest	Expanding gap treatment	Comp 60 Stands 10, 21 Comp 63 Stands 4, 7, 15, 21 Comp 64 Stands 20, 34 Comp 66 Stand 25	211 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Maintenance of oak forest	Commercial thinning	Comp 59 Stands 3, 14, 17, 23, 27, 48 Comp 60 Stands 24, 29, 32 Comp 61 Stand 5 Comp 63 Stand 1 Comp 64 Stands 4, 16 Comp 66 Stands 12, 18 Comp 67 Stand 40	811 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Maintenance of oak forest	Expanding gap treatment	Comp 62 Stand 40 Comp 63 Stands 8, 38 Comp 64 Stand 33 Comp 66 Stand 20 Comp 66 Stand 22	256 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Commercial and non-commercial thinning of pine plantations to improve forest health	Commercial thinning	Comp 55 Stands 11, 30, 36 Comp 59 Stands 19, 24 Comp 60 Stands 13, 16 Comp 61 Stands 9, 11 Comp 62 Stands 3, 8, 9, 29 Comp 63 Stand 11 Comp 67 Stand 34 Comp 68 Stands 13, 26, 27	746 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Create young forest (ESH) in mesic hardwoods	Two-aged regeneration harvest	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Create young forest (ESH) by daylighting roads and permanent openings	Two-aged regeneration harvest	**Road Daylighting:** 8.2 miles, Comps 59, 60, 61, 62, 63 **Permanent WLO Daylighting:** 5 WLOs, Comps 61, 62	**Road Daylighting**: 62 acres **WLO Daylighting**: 10 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Creating young oak forest (ESH)	Shelterwood or two-aged regeneration harvests	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Restoring open woodland habitats on appropriate sites	Commercial or non-commercial thinning	Comp 62 Stands 5, 7, 10, 30, 44, 48 Comp 68 Stands 8, 10, 17, 19, 21	599 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Canopy gap creation in closed-canopied mesic stands	Commercial and non-commercial thinning Overstory and midstory reduction w/ variable tree density retention; gaps implemented would total <25% of stand acreage with gap size no more than ¾-acre each.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Create or expand permanent openings	Remove trees Prepare site by grading and stump removal	**Expand 5 WLOs:** Comps 61, 62	10 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Reduce hazardous fuels in the WUI	Mid-story reduction Commercial or non-commercial thinning	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Non-Commercial Action(s): Select all that apply. See Table 17 in the EA for full description of action and connected actions.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☒	Maintenance of oak forest	Mid-story reduction	Comp 55 Stand 20 Comp 59 Stands 11, 13, 30, 33, 36 Comp 60 Stand 22 Comp 61 Stands 3, 4, 7, 8 Comp 62 Stands 4, 13, 31, 33, 46 Comp 66 Stand 24	533 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Maintenance of oak forest	Crown-touching release with manual methods	Comp 63 Stand 32 Comp 64 Stand 2 Comp 66 Stand 9 Comp 68 Stand 16	125 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Commercial and non-commercial thinning of pine plantations to improve forest health	Non-commercial thinning	Comp 55 Stand 35 Comp 60 Stands 20, 30 Comp 64 Stands 13, 29 Comp 66 Stand 14 Comp 68 Stand 29	219 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Replacement of culverts, fords, or bridges to increase aquatic organism passage and function	Replacement of culverts, fords, or bridges	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☒	Prescribed fire in new burn blocks to facilitate restoration or maintenance of fire-adapted ecosystems or to reduce hazardous fuels	Prescribed burning during dormant and/or early growing season on a recurring basis	**Bad Creek Cooperative Rx:** Comps 68, 67 **Camp Creek Rx:** Comp 67 **Cutting Bone Rx:** Comps 59, 60, 61, 62 **Raven Rock Rx:** Comp 67 **Rocky Mountain Rx:** Comp 66 **Sockem Dog Rx:** Comp 67 **Stekoa Creek Rx:** Comps 59, 61, 62 **Stone Place Rx:** Comp 68 **Stroud Mountain Rx:** Comp 55 **Wolf Creek Rx:** Comps 61, 62 **Woodall Shoals Rx:** Comp 59	**Bad Creek Cooperative** 437 acres **Camp Creek** 356 acres **Cutting Bone** 803 acres **Raven Rock** 771 acres **Rocky Mountain** 722 acres **Sockem Dog** 507 acres **Stekoa Creek** 570 acres **Stone Place** 646 acres **Stroud Mountain** 112 acres **Wolf Creek** 119 acres **Woodall Shoals** 1565 acres	Click or tap here to enter text.

Selected for this Project	Activities That are Part of This Project	Primary Actions	Location (ie. HUC, Compartment Stand, and or Geographic Description)	Draft Acres and/or miles of road/trails, etc.	Final Acres and /or miles of road/trails, etc.
☐	Willis Knob Horse Trail Improvements	Construct new trail Re-route and construct/re-construct portions of trail on areas with resource concerns outside of the WSR, block or obliterate problem portions of trail Relocate parking area Construction of connector trails from parking to campground Campground improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Develop and maintain sustainable recreation within the WSR corridor – Earls Ford	Construction of new system trails Removal and restoration of degraded sites and designation of dispersed camping areas	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Willis Knob Horse Trail Improvements within the WSR	Re-route and construct/re-construct portions of trail on areas with resource concerns, block or obliterate problem portions of trail	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Action(s) or Conditions that Need Additional Analysis (Please Refer to Step 2 Resource Sections):

Specific Action or Condition Needing Analysis, if applicable	Analysis complete?
N/A	☐yes ☒no

Activity Name: Canebrake restoration actions including overstory removal (may include commercial treatment)

Detailed Description:
Existing Condition (Need): Cane is a common plant on the Forest, scattered in floodplain habitats. However, an overly dense canopy prevents a vigorous monoculture of cane from developing into a true canebrake.

Desired Condition: Thin canopy with less than 40% canopy cover and a dense vigorous stand of cane that would provide true canebrake habitat. (Forest Plan MRx 9.F-001).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Stream terraces and riparian zones where there is existing cane, but it is suppressed by other vegetation.

How to Implement Change: An area on both sides of Stekoa Creek (approximately 15 acres) has a good potential for the restoration of native river cane. There is already cane present, but most of it is thinly scattered under a fairly closed canopy of trees. A variety of treatments would be utilized in combination to restore canebrakes. Both overstory and midstory trees would be reduced mechanically (mastication/mowing/hand-felling) and through the use of herbicides to get sunlight to the cane. The density of canopy cover would be variable but would be reduced so less than approximately 40% canopy cover remains, with trees widely space or clustered in a mosaic pattern. The treatment would be implemented so the river cane response would be monitored to determine what canopy cover is most effective for restoration.

Existing river cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) at the proposed restoration site within the Lower Stekoa Creek drainage.

In general, canebrake restoration sites would have very little canopy cover after treatment. Cane may also be transplanted from a site within the project area to an area where it is sparse. In areas infested with exotic species, multiple treatments may be needed to control non-native invasive species.

Prescribed Burns:
Woodall Shoals Rx – Comp 59 Stands 46, 47

☒ **Map(s) Attached**
Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers*

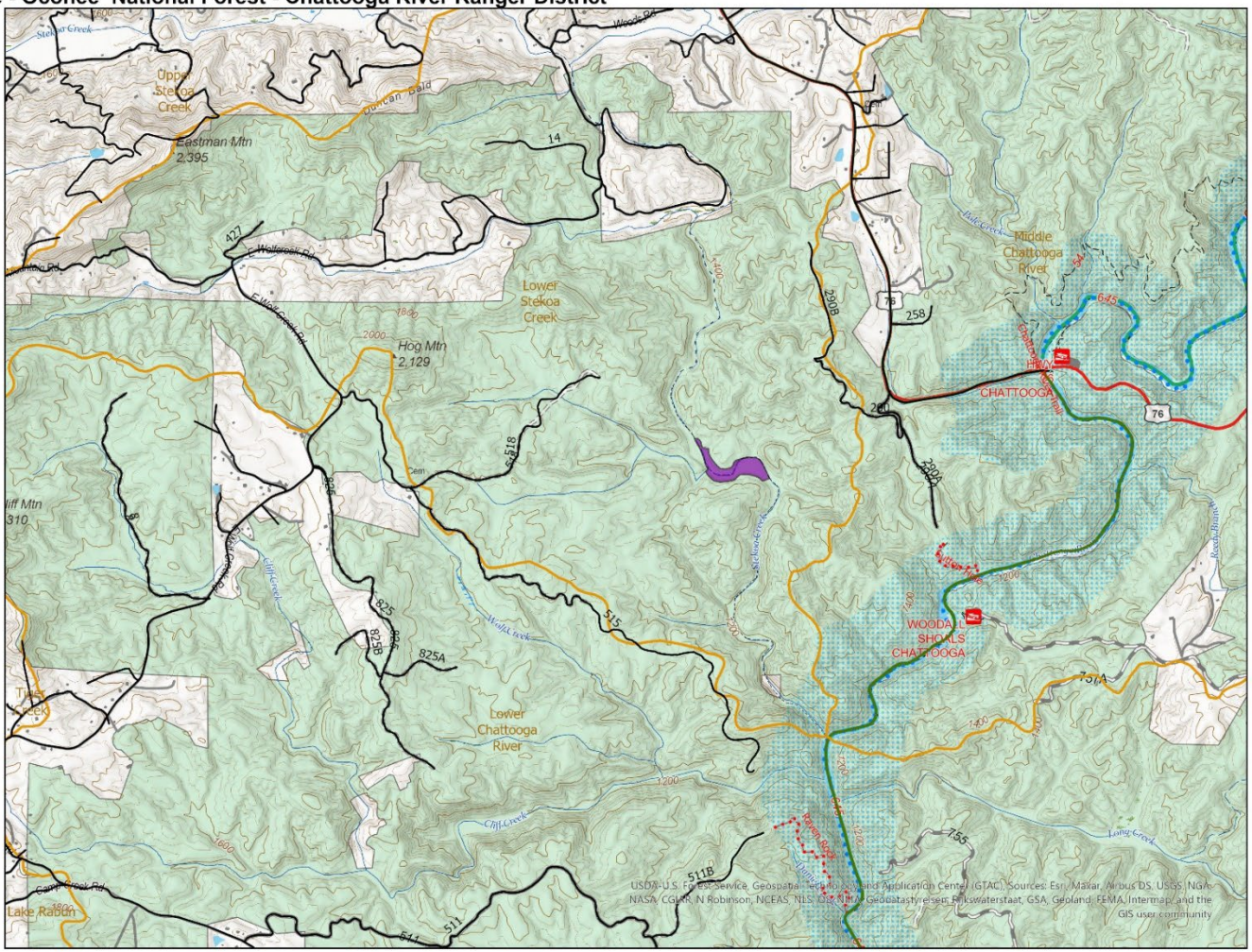
PDFs 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 21.

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/26/2025

Canebrake Restoration



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Activity Name: Restoration of southern yellow pine forest on dry sites dominated by mid to late-successional Virginia or white pine – two-aged regeneration harvest

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Nearly a century of fire suppression has resulted in the establishment of more than 21,000 acres Virginia and/or white pine on dry sites ecologically suitable for fire-dependent shortleaf pine.

Desired Condition: Fire-dependent shortleaf and pitch pines are restored to ecologically appropriate sites and to sites where they once likely occurred (Forest Plan Objective 3.1 & 3.2). These treatments would also result in the creation of young forest habitats, which are generally lacking in the project area.

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Dry sites dominated by mid to late successional Virginia pine or white pine.

How to Implement Change: Restoration of shortleaf pine would be implemented using artificial regeneration methods. A two-aged regeneration harvest would be implemented to initiate the restoration process. Under this harvest method, the majority of the overstory trees in restoration areas would be removed. This would create large, continuous openings for restoration planting for regeneration. A portion of the trees (minimum of 15 ft^2 per acre) in restoration areas would be reserved from cutting to form the two-aged condition. These trees would be retained in a non-uniform and variable distribution and would remain on-site indefinitely. Long-lived species such as shortleaf pine, white oak, chestnut oak, or hickory would be selected as reserve trees to be retained. Virginia and white pines, and other less desirable hardwood species would be harvested from the sites.

Following the harvest, restoration areas would be prepared for planting by: (1) directed herbicide methods (cut-stump and foliar) to selectively treat non-desirable species persisting on the sites, and (2) a growing season site preparation prescribed burn. Once sites are prepared, restoration areas would be planted with shortleaf pine seedlings. One to three years following planting, planted seedlings would be released from woody competition (individual tree) using hand tools or a directed herbicide application (directed foliar, cut surface, or basal bark methods) depending on the species and degree of competition. Once the canopy of the restoration areas approach crown closure (approximately seven to ten years post planting), a thinning using manual hand tools (chainsaws or brush cutters) would be applied to reduce competition and maintain desired tree species composition *(for more information about connected herbicide actions, see Table 41 in the 2021 Foothills Landscape Project Environmental Assessment, page B45. For more information about site prep burns, see Site Preparation and Maintenance, page B45).*

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 59 Stand 8:	31 ac White pine stand, 94 years old
Comp 59 Stand 21:	11 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 82 years old
Comp 59 Stand 28:	14 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 51 years old
Comp 62 Stand 14:	22 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 71 years old
Comp 66 Stand 1:	57 ac White pine stand, 51 years old
Comp 66 Stand 3:	55 ac White pine stand, 63 years old

Comp 67 Stand 26: 27 ac Virginia pine-oak stand, 83 years old

Prescribed Burns:
Woodall Shoals Rx – Comp 59 Stands 8, 21, 28
Deadin Timber Rx – Comp 62 Stand 14
Rocky Mountain A Rx – Comp 66 Stands 1, 3
Bad Creek A Rx – Comp 67 Stand 26

Comp 66 Stand 01, White pine stand proposed for restoration of southern yellow pine forest through two-aged regeneration harvest.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208, Lower Tallulah HUC - #030601020108, and the Middle Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

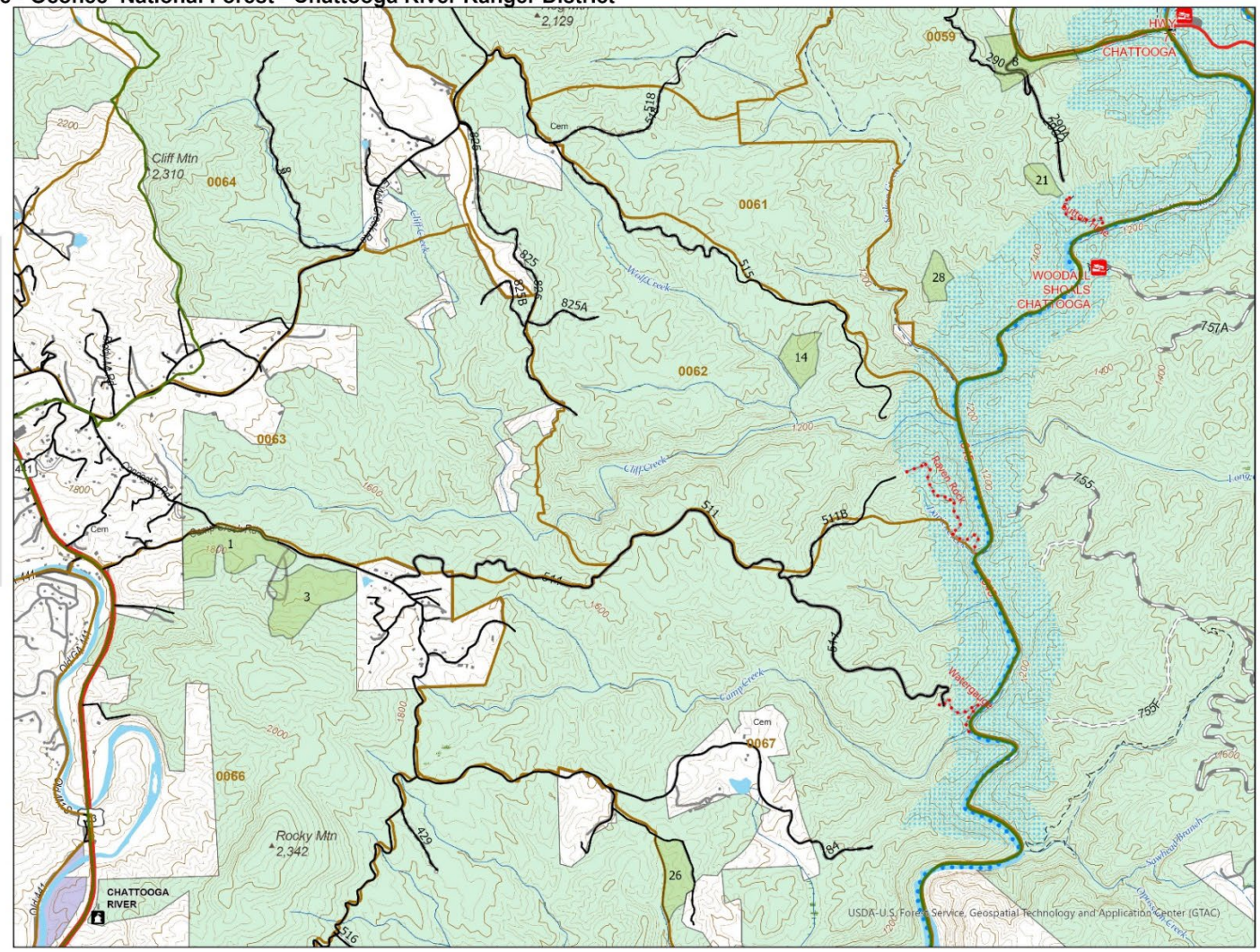
PDFs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 8/6/2025

Restoration of Southern Yellow pine Forest on Dry Sites Dominated by Mid to Late-successional Virginia or White Pine: Two-aged Regeneration Harvest - Shortleaf Restoration



Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

0 0.150.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

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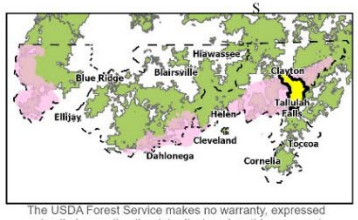

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Activity Name: Restoration of southern yellow pine forest or oak forest on sites currently occupied by off-site pine plantations or failed shortleaf or pitch pine plantations – two-aged regeneration harvest to restore shortleaf/pitch pine

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Previous management in the Foothills Project area resulted in establishment of over 11,000 acres of off-site pine plantations of pole-sized white pine or loblolly where regeneration to suitable southern yellow pine is desired.

Desired Condition: Fire-dependent southern yellow pines (shortleaf, pitch, table mountain pines) are restored to ecologically appropriate sites and to sites where they once likely occurred (Forest Plan Objective 3.1 and 3.2, OBJ-9.F-03).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Off-site pine plantations of pole-sized white pine or loblolly where regeneration to suitable southern yellow pine is desired. Some of these plantations exist on sites more ecologically appropriate for oak or mixed oak-pine forest.

How to Implement Change: Restore off-site loblolly pine or white pine plantations to site-appropriate species through the removal of the off-site planted species. Actions would be similar to those described in the preceeding *Restoration of southern yellow pine forest on dry sites dominated by mid to late-successional Virginia or white pine* section, including the specified connected actions.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 60 Stand 6: 31 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 65 years old
Comp 60 Stand 18: 21 ac Loblolly pine stand, 39 years old
Comp 61 Stand 14: 35 ac Loblolly pine stand, 46 years old
Comp 61 Stand 17: 52 ac Loblolly pine stand, 41 years old
Comp 62 Stand 2: 29 ac Loblolly pine stand, 41 years old
Comp 62 Stand 11: 26 ac Loblolly pine stand, 43 years old
Comp 63 Stand 2: 55 ac Loblolly pine stand, 43 years old
Comp 64 Stand 21: 56 ac Loblolly pine stand, 44 years old
Comp 64 Stand 24: 13 ac Loblolly pine stand, 43 years old
Comp 67 Stand 14: 37 ac Loblolly pine stand, 37 years old
Comp 67 Stand 16: 23 ac Loblolly pine stand, 37 years old
Comp 67 Stand 19: 34 ac Loblolly pine stand, 41 years old
Comp 68 Stand 20: 62 ac Loblolly pine stand, 46 years old

Prescribed Burns:

Stekoa Creek Rx – Comp 60 Stand 6; Comp 61 Stands 14, 17
Cutting Bone Rx – Comp 60 Stand 18; Comp 62 Stands 2, 11 (partial)
Camp Creek Rx – Comp 67 Stand 14
Stone Place A Rx – Comp 68 Stand 20

Comp 63 Stand 02, Loblolly pine stand proposed for restoration through two-aged regeneration harvest to restore shortleaf/pitch pine.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210 and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

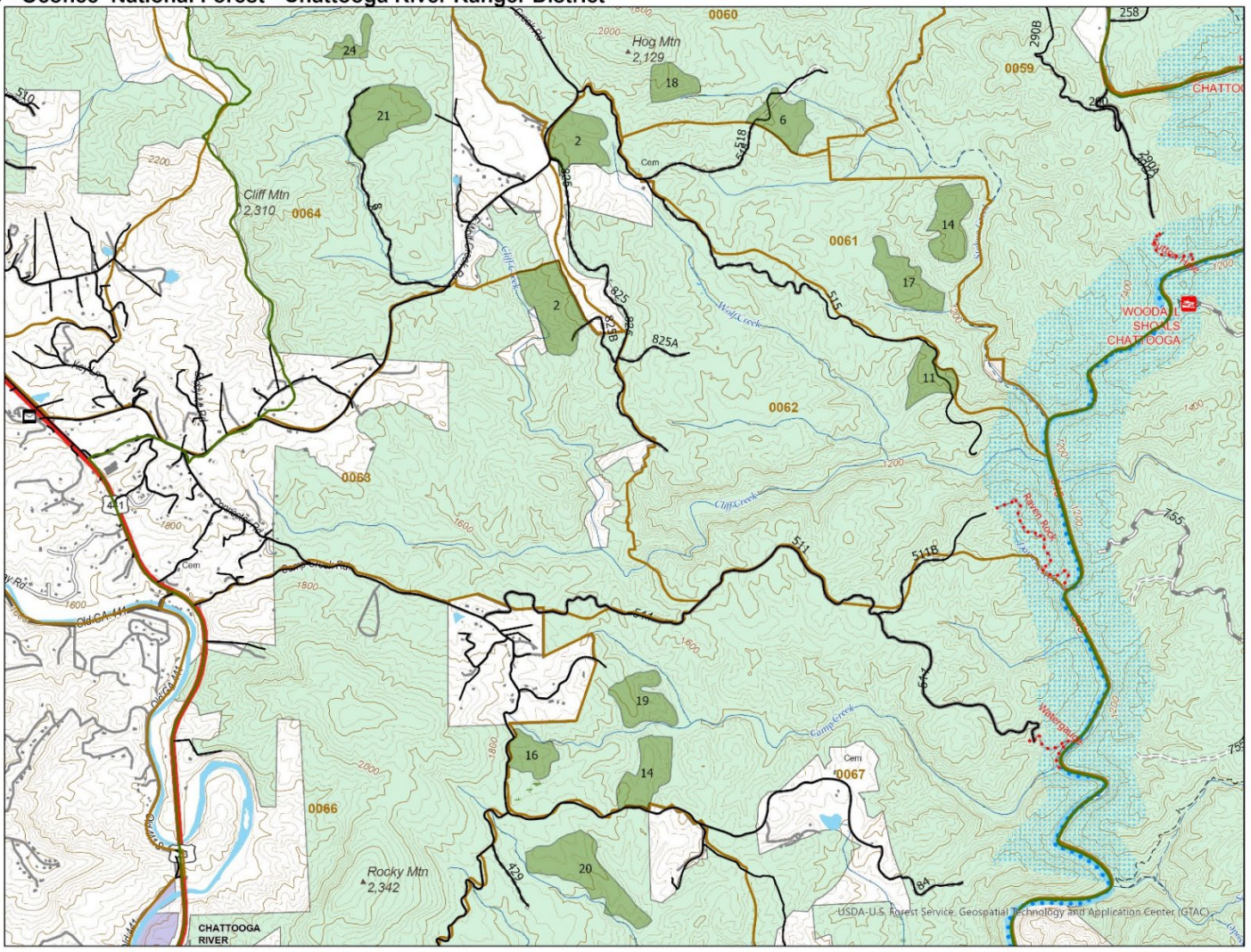
PDFs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 8/6/2025

Restoration of Southern Yellow Pine Forest or Oak Forest on Sites Currently Occupied by Off-site Pine Plantations (Loblolly or White pine) or Failed Shortleaf Plantations:
Two-aged Regeneration Harvest - Shortleaf Restoration (Mechanical & Non-mechanical)



Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

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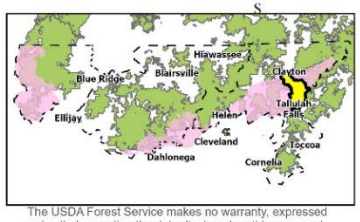

Activity Name: Restoration of southern yellow pine forest or oak forest on sites currently occupied by off-site pine plantations or failed shortleaf or pitch pine plantations – two-aged regeneration harvest to restore oak

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Previous management in the Foothills Project area resulted in establishment of over 11,000 acres of off-site pine plantations of pole-sized white pine or loblolly where restoration to suitable oak or oak-pine stands are desired.

Desired Condition: Oak or oak-pine forest is restored to areas of the Foothills Landscape where it most likely existed or where it is ecologically appropriate (Forest Plan Objective 3.6).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Off-site pine plantations of pole-sized white pine or loblolly where these plantations exist on sites more ecologically appropriate for oak or mixed oak-pine forest.

How to Implement Change: Restore off-site loblolly pine or white pine plantations to site-appropriate species through removal of the off-site planted species. Opportunities to increase oak abundance through restoration exists within these stands. Restoration of these sites to oak would be emphasized in off-site plantations with low desired pine stocking and where adequate pre-existing oak, either in the canopy of the plantations or in the understory, is available to successfully restore the sites to an oak-dominated composition.

On sites where oak restoration is elected and oak is abundant in the understory of the off-site plantations as seedlings, restoration would include a regeneration harvest to initiate the oak restoration process. Because these sites would likely contain an overstory dominated by an off-site pine species (loblolly or white pine), the regeneration harvest would remove all or most of the current overstory, reducing the potential for the off-site species to re-seed the harvested sites. This action would result in the creation of young forest habitat because the current overstory would be removed in its entirety. Upon removal of the off-site overstory through regeneration harvest, the areas would be prepared for natural regeneration to oak by applying directed herbicide treatments (foliar and cut-stump methods). To supplement the natural oak regeneration, restoration areas could be hand-planted with oak seedlings on a wide spacing. Planted and naturally regenerating oak seedlings would be individually released from non-desirable competition one to multiple times during the first 10 years of regeneration using manual methods or directed herbicide treatments (basal bark/streamline or cut stem) to ensure oaks remain competitive during early stand development.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 60 Stand 15: 47 ac Loblolly pine stand, 39 years old
Comp 61 Stand 12: 16 ac Loblolly pine stand, 36 years old
Comp 62 Stand 36: 46 ac Loblolly pine stand, 42 years old

Prescribed Burns:

Cutting Bone Rx – Comp 60 Stand 15

Stekoa Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stand 12
Deadin Timber Rx – Comp 62 Stand 36

Comp 61 Stand 12, Loblolly pine stand proposed for oak restoration.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210 and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

PDFs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 8/6/2025

Restoration of Southern Yellow Pine Forest or Oak Forest on Sites Currently Occupied by Off-site Pine Plantations (Loblolly or White pine) or Failed Shortleaf Plantations: Two-aged Regeneration Harvest - Restore Oak

Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

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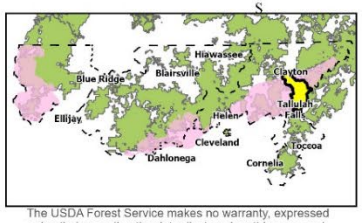
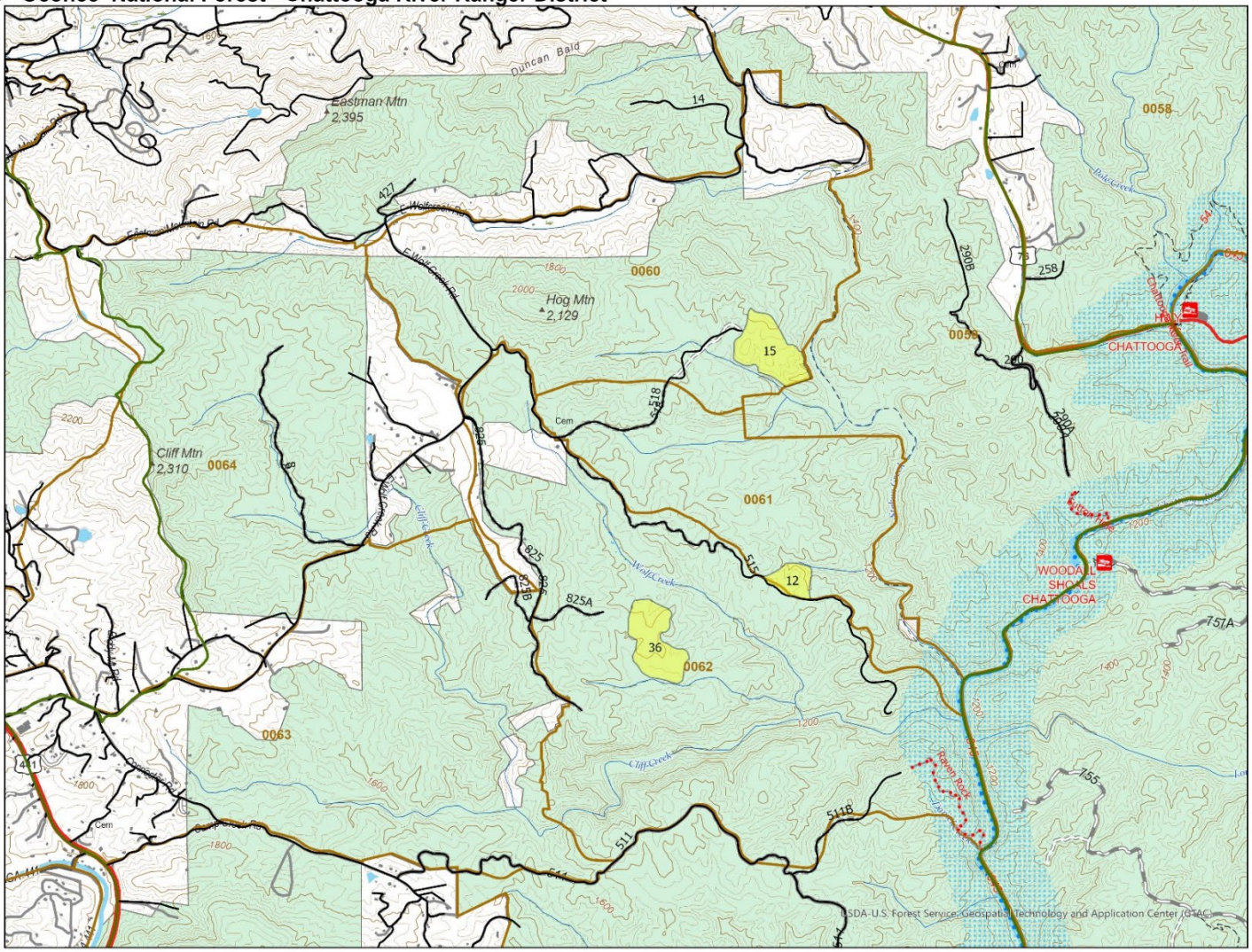




Activity Name: Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest – commercial thinning

Detailed Description:
Existing Condition (Need): Within the Foothills Landscape Project area, there are more than 30,000 acres of fire-dependent, mid-late successional southern yellow pine forests that are highly departed from the open forest environment necessary for these species to maintain dominance through self-replacement (i.e., regeneration).

Desired Condition: Open stand environments and reduced duff layers that allow for these fire-dependent species to self-perpetuate on the site where they currently exist (Forest Plan Objective 8.1, 8.2, OBJ-9.F-04).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: There are two types of conditions that would trigger restoration actions:
• Mid- to late-successional shortleaf pine stands and/or stands that contain pitch or Table Mountain pine where midstory conditions are prohibiting natural regeneration, or
• Where mid- to late-successional shortleaf pine stands exist but where prescribed fire cannot be used regularly to achieve desired outcomes

How to Implement Change: Stands selected for treatment would be mechanically thinned to about 40 – 60 square feet per acre (ft^2/ac) of residual basal area to establish a more open stand condition. Shortleaf pines and upland oaks and hickories would be given preference as leave trees during the thinning treatments. Following the thinning treatments, the areas would be evaluated on the ground to determine the degree and intensity of subsequent understory treatments in order to meet desired outcomes. For example, if shade tolerant, fire intolerant understory vegetation persists after the thinning, then it would be treated using a combination of herbicides and/or prescribed fire. In most cases, initial understory treatments would be conducted by using herbicides to control anticipated undesired hardwood brush and stump sprouting vegetation persisting on the sites. Initial herbicide treatments would be selectively applied to undesired understory vegetation using directed foliar, cut stem or basal bark/streamline methods. The specific method of herbicide application would be based on the composition, size and density of the understory vegetation persisting on the sites *(for more information about connected herbicide actions, see Table 41 in the 2021 Foothills Landscape Project Environmental Assessment, page B45 and the Vegetation Report).*

After the initial herbicide treatments, prescribed burning would be used to achieve site specific objectives. Site conditions would be evaluated for prescribed burning and the appropriate burning season (either dormant or growing season). Prescribed fire treatments would continue on a recurring interval (every two to seven years) until the desired results are achieved, which include the reduction in the woody hardwood understory, establishment of diverse understories, and a restored and receptive seedbed. Upon achievement of the desired conditions, fire treatments would be
applied less frequently. This would allow for pine seedling recruitment to be initiated in the understory.

In certain cases, mechanical mastication, followed by the previously referenced herbicide and prescribed fire treatments would be used to reduce unwanted understory vegetation. This treatment option would most likely be used where understories are occupied by dense shrubby

vegetation (i.e., mountain laurel) that would make initial herbicide treatments infeasible. In these cases, mastication of the shrubby layer would be implemented first. Follow-up herbicide treatments for to control stump sprouting vegetation and/or prescribed fire (if possible) would be implemented following the mastication treatments to further control the undesired understory

Comp 61 Stand 02, Shortleaf pine stand proposed for maintenance of southern yellow pine forest through commercial thinning.

<u>Stands Proposed for Treatment:</u>

Comp 59 Stand 15: 43 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 39 years old
Comp 59 Stand 29: 44 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 115 years old
Comp 59 Stand 41: 33 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 116 years old
Comp 59 Stand 47: 131 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 93 years old
Comp 60 Stand 4: 11 ac Pitch pine stand, 50 years old
Comp 60 Stand 12: 53 ac Pitch pine-oak stand, 49 years old
Comp 60 Stand 17: 22 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 119 years old
Comp 60 Stand 23: 56 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 113 years old
Comp 61 Stand 1: 19 ac Pitch pine-oak stand, 53 years old
Comp 61 Stand 2: 27 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 36 years old
Comp 61 Stand 6: 34 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 36 years old
Comp 61 Stand 22: 77 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 71 years old
Comp 62 Stand 32: 46 ac Loblolly pine stand, 101 years old
Comp 63 Stand 16: 16 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 33 years old

Comp 63 Stand 36: 22 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 27 years old
Comp 64 Stand 3: 27 ac Pitch pine-oak stand, 45 years old
Comp 64 Stand 32: 33 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 33 years old
Comp 66 Stand 15: 44 ac Pitch pine stand, 36 years old
Comp 67 Stand 17: 33 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 43 years old
Comp 67 Stand 24: 46 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 108 years old
Comp 67 Stand 29: 59 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 68 Stand 7: 29 ac Virginia pine-oak stand, 36 years old
Comp 68 Stand 12: 20 ac Southern red oak-yellow pine stand, 39 years old
Comp 68 Stand 25: 33 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 31 years old
Comp 68 Stand 28: 24 ac Pitch pine stand, 40 years old
Comp 68 Stand 30: 12 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 32 years old
Comp 68 Stand 31: 39 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 96 years old

Prescribed Burns:
Woodall Shoals Rx – Comp 59 Stands 15, 29, 41, 47
Cutting Bone Rx – Comp 60 Stands 4, 17, 23; Comp 61 Stands 1, 2 (partial)
Stekoa Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stands 2 (partial), 6 (partial), 22
Wolf Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stand 6 (partial)
Deadin Timber Rx – Comp 62 Stand 32
Watergauge Rx – Comp 63 Stand 36; Comp 67 Stands 24, 29
Rocky Mountain B Rx – Comp 66 Stand 15 (Partial)
Rocky Mountain C Rx – Comp 66 Stand 15 (Partial)
Sockem Dog Rx – Comp 67 Stand 17
Bad Creek A Rx – Comp 68 Stands 7, 12, 28 (partial)
Tallulah Gorge Co-op Rx – Comp 68 Stand 25
Stone Place A Rx – Comp 68 Stand 30
Stone Place B Rx – Comp 68 Stand 31

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208, and the Middle Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

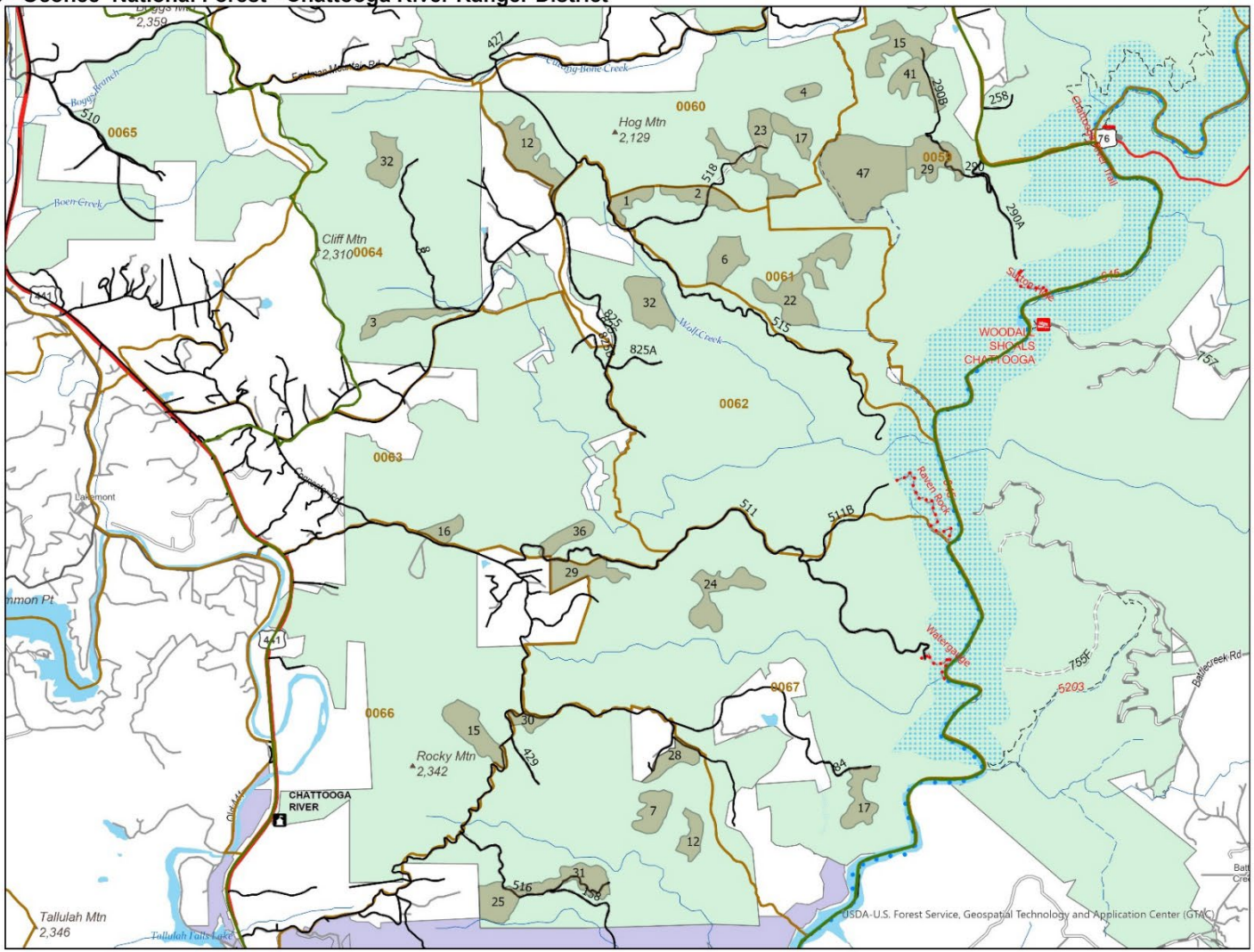
PDFs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 8/6/2025

Maintenance of Southern Yellow Pine Forest:
Commercial Thinning



Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

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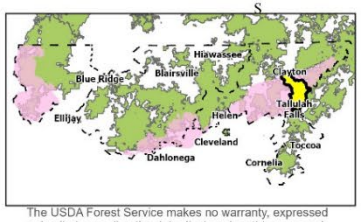


Activity Name: Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest – expanding gap treatment

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Within the FLP area, there are more than 30,000 acres of fire-dependent, mid-late successional southern yellow pine forests that are highly departed from the open forest environment necessary for these species to maintain dominance through self-replacement (i.e., regeneration).

Desired Condition: Open stand environments and reduced duff layers that allow for these fire-dependent species to self-perpetuate on the site where they currently exist (Forest Plan Objective 8.1, 8.2, OBJ-9.F-04).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: There are two types of conditions that would trigger restoration actions:

- Mid to late successional shortleaf pine stands and/or stands that contain pitch or Table Mountain pine where midstory conditions are prohibiting natural regeneration
- Where mid to late successional shortleaf pine stands exist but where Rx fire cannot be used regularly to achieve desired outcomes

How to Implement Change: If fire cannot be regularly used in stands identified for Southern Yellow Pine Maintenance, the expanding-gap silvicultural method would be employed. The expanding-gap method is being proposed in collaboration with the Southern Research Station. Gaps would be created in the stands by removing overstory trees to create 0.5-acre up to one-acre openings. Initial canopy gaps would be located where advanced shortleaf, pitch, or table mountain pine regeneration exists or where a need for structural diversity is determined and recruitment of southern yellow pine regeneration is anticipated. Scarification of ground surface layer may be needed to promote recruitment of additional natural regeneration of preferred southern yellow pine. Artificial regeneration may also be implemented planting on an eight-foot by eight-foot or wider spacing, while also potentially clumping seedlings together in clusters of five to 15 seedlings.

After the seedlings are able to compete with surrounding vegetation in a free-to-grow condition (eight to 12 years), the gap would be ready to expand by another one to two tree lengths around the perimeter, to be conducted by the removal of overstory. The surrounding stand would be thinned to a residual basal area of 50 – 70 ft^2/ac to help control the light environment. The treatment areas would be treated with herbicides, mechanical mastication, or manual hand tool methods to reduce the competition with undesired species.

A natural gap provides the right environment to produce advanced southern yellow pine regeneration. The proposed expanding gap treatment would create a similar light environment.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 60 Stand 10:	21 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 115 years old
Comp 60 Stand 21:	17 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 115 years old
Comp 63 Stand 4:	22 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 61 years old
Comp 63 Stand 7:	16 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 87 years old
Comp 63 Stand 15:	17 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 63 Stand 21:	26 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 104 years old
Comp 64 Stand 20:	60 ac Pitch pine stand, 135 years old
Comp 64 Stand 34:	16 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 125 years old
Comp 66 Stand 25:	16 ac Pitch pine-oak stand, 70 years old

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Lower Tallulah River HUC - #030601020108, and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

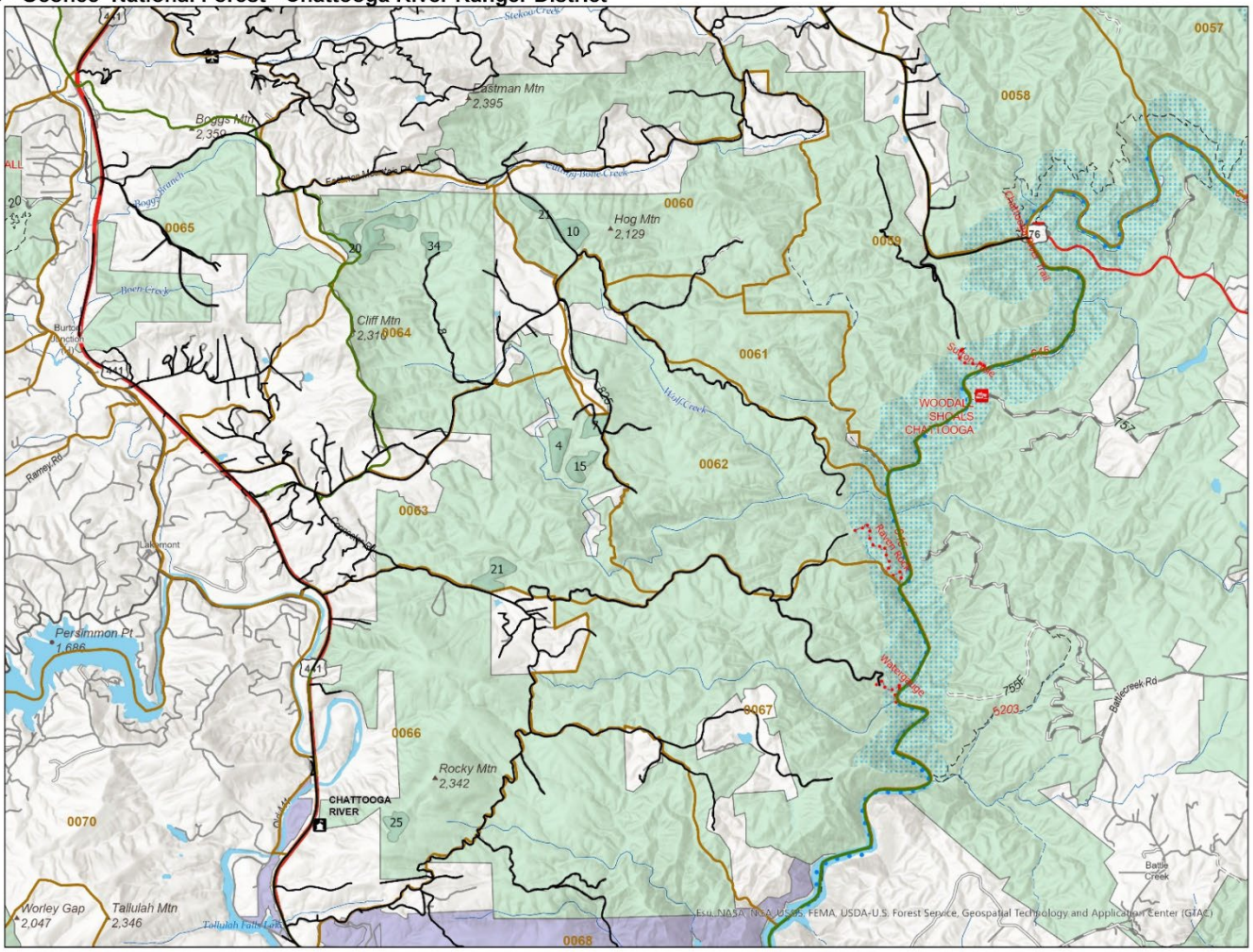
PDFs 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/30/2025

Maintenance of Southern Yellow Pine Forest:
Expanding Gap Treatment



Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

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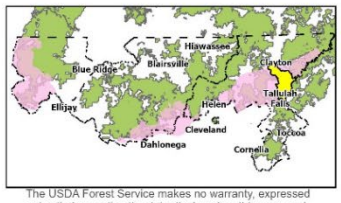


Activity Name: Maintenance of oak forest – commercial thinning

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Oak dominated forest types exist on more than 55,000 acres within the Foothills Project area. Over 90% of the oak forest is in late successional stage habitats. A general lack of disturbances in the oak forest community, including fire, has promoted the development of shade-tolerant, fire-sensitive species which are suppressing oak regeneration processes. This problem is most acute on the more productive oak sites but is evident in oak stands growing on lower productivity sites in many locations as well.

Desired Condition: Conditions within oak stands allow for and perpetuate natural oak regeneration processes to resume so that oak maintain dominance in the future (Forest Plan Objective 3.7).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Mid to late successional oak exists on low to moderate productivity sites.

How to Implement Change: On lower to moderate productivity oak sites, commercial thinning in combination with midstory reduction treatments would be implemented on mid-late successional oak stands to increase oak regeneration potential. This treatment option would be implemented where conditions indicate that current oak regeneration potential is low (i.e., oak seedlings are small, infrequent, and/or are being outcompeted by shade-tolerant competitors in the understory). In areas selected for intermediate thinning, the thinning would reduce overstory trees to a residual basal area of 40 – 60 ft^2/ac, favoring oaks, hickories, or shortleaf pine. Following the commercial thinning, the areas would be evaluated for the need of subsequent midstory reduction treatments that would be designed to further reduce oak seedling competitors.

Treatment of the midstory and understory would be employed using a combination of direct herbicide treatments and/or prescribed burning. If unwanted vegetation persists on the sites after the thinning, then initial understory treatments would likely include herbicide applications to control this competition. Herbicide treatments could include directed foliar, cut stem or basal bark/streamline methods. The composition, size, origin, and density of understory competitors would dictate the herbicide method selected. Once herbicide treatments have been applied, prescribed burning treatments, where feasible, would be used to further reduce competition and to maintain the desired understory environment. Initial prescribed burning would be conducted during the dormant season. Subsequent burn treatments would be applied during the growing season until the desired conditions have been achieved (i.e., the development of oak reproduction). Periodic burn treatments would be applied using a combination of dormant and growing season treatments and frequency would be altered to allow oak seedlings to gain in height and prepare for canopy recruitment.

Comp 63 Stand 01, Proposed for maintenance of oak forest through commercial thinning.

<u>Stands Proposed for Treatment:</u>

Comp 59 Stand 3:	47 ac white oak-black oak-yellow pine stand, 56 years old
Comp 59 Stand 14:	31 ac white oak-black oak-yellow pine stand, 108 years old
Comp 59 Stand 17:	35 ac white oak-black oak-yellow pine stand, 89 years old
Comp 59 Stand 23:	23 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 59 Stand 27:	37 ac Upland hardwoods-white pine stand, 51 years old
Comp 59 Stand 48:	19 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 60 Stand 24:	69 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 60 Stand 29:	32 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 60 Stand 32:	20 ac Yellow poplar-white oak-northern red oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 61 Stand 5:	48 ac Upland hardwoods-white pine stand, 55 years old
Comp 63 Stand 1:	95 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 52 years old
Comp 64 Stand 4:	37 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 45 years old
Comp 64 Stand 16:	49 ac Upland hardwoods-white pine stand, 51 years old
Comp 66 Stand 12:	58 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 49 years old
Comp 66 Stand 18:	114 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 76 years old
Comp 67 Stand 40:	97 ac White oak-black oak-yellow pine, 120 years old

Prescribed Burns:
Woodall Shoals Rx – Comp 59 Stands 3, 14, 17, 23, 27, 48
Cutting Bone Rx – Comp 60 Stands 24, 29, 32
Stekoa Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stand 5
Rocky Mountain B Rx – Comp 66 Stand 12 (partial)
Rocky Mountain C Rx – Comp 66 Stand 12 (partial), 18
Sockem Dog Rx – Comp 67 Stand 40

These stands would be commercially thinned and then re-evaluated for follow-up midstory treatment needs to encourage the development of advanced oak regeneration.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208, and the Middle Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

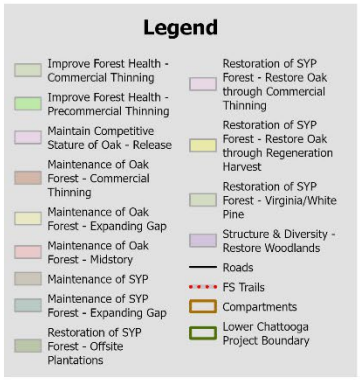
PDFs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 10/10/2025

Maintenance of Oak Forest
Commercial Thinning



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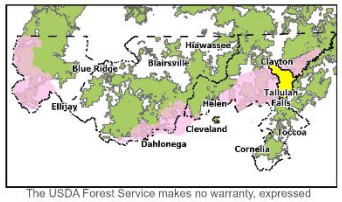

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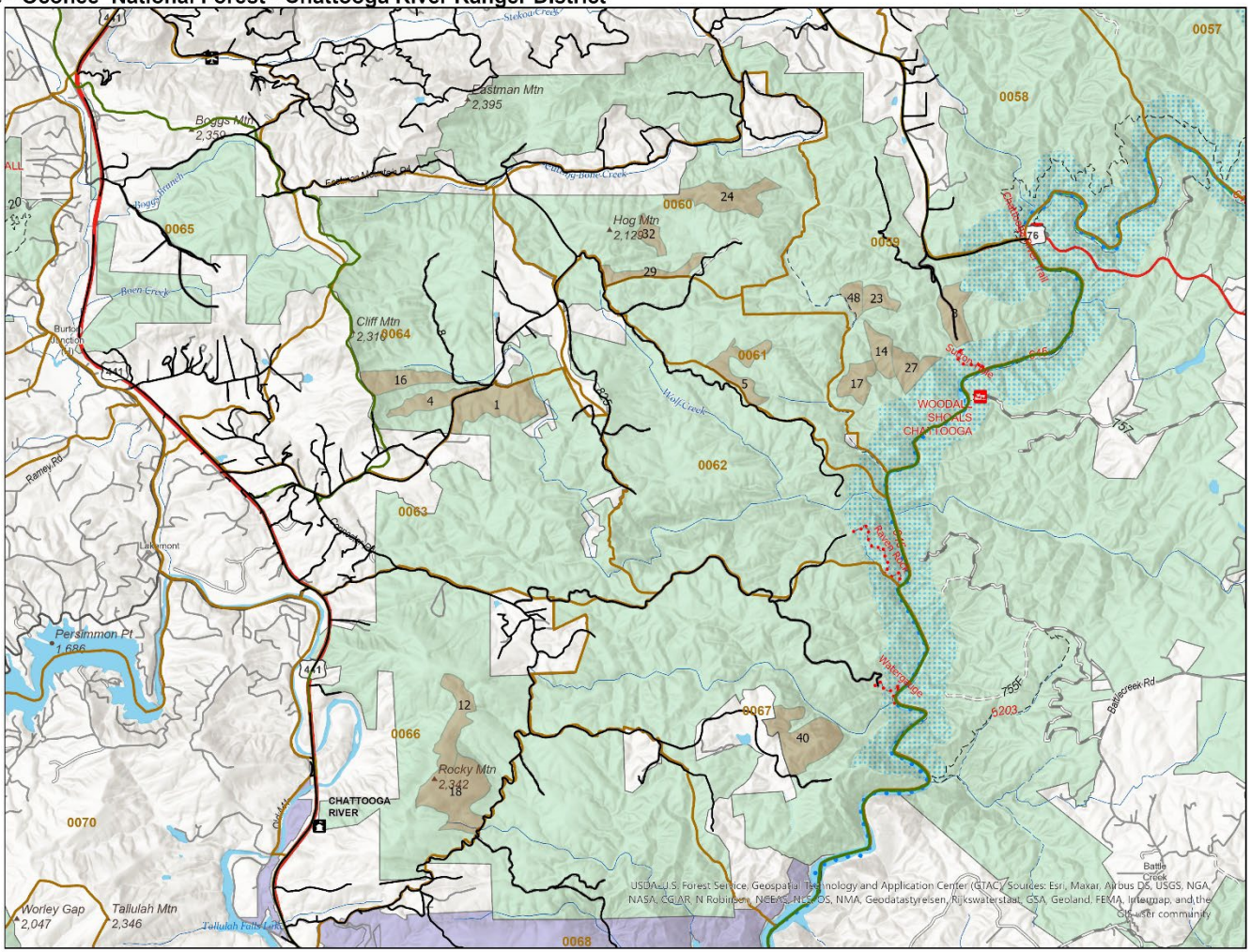


Activity Name: Maintenance of oak forest – mid-story reduction and crown-touching release

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Oak dominated forest types exist on more than 55,000 acres within the Foothills Project area. Over 90% of the oak forest is in late successional stage habitats. There are 0 acres of young oak (less than 10 yrs. within the landscape). A general lack of disturbances in the oak forest community, including fire, has promoted the development of shade-tolerant, fire-sensitive species which are suppressing oak regeneration processes. This problem is most acute on the more productive oak sites but is evident in oaks stands growing on lower productivity sites in many locations as well.

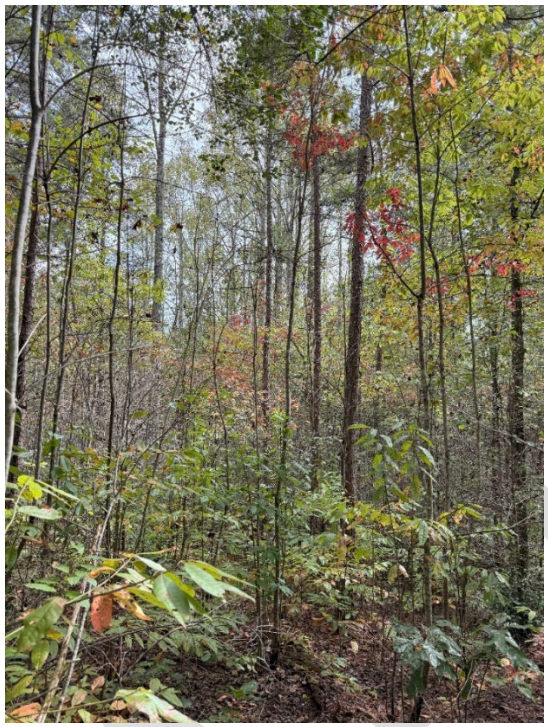
Desired Condition: Conditions within oak stands allow for and perpetuate natural oak regeneration processes to resume so that oak maintain dominance in the future (Forest Plan Objective 3.7)

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: There are two conditions that would trigger restoration actions:

- Where mid- to late-successional oak exists on low to moderate productivity sites, and
- Where mid- to late-successional oak exists on moderate to high productivity sites.

How to Implement Change:

To increase or restore oak regeneration potential within existing oak stands, several treatment options are proposed. These treatments are designed to alter the light environment on the forest floor to stimulate growth of oak seedlings, while controlling oak competitors in the understory. Treatments would result in oak seedlings that are larger and more competitive, thereby increasing the regeneration potential in existing mature oak stands. Stands with higher regeneration potential can maintain species dominance because adequate, competitive seedlings are available to replace parent overstory trees.



Comp 62 Stand 13, Proposed for oak midstory treatment to cultivate advanced oak regeneration.

Increasing Oak Regeneration Potential with Midstory Reduction on Moderate to High Site Productivity, Mid-Late Successional Oak Sites:

On moderate to highly productive oak sites within the landscape, midstory reduction treatments would be implemented on existing mature oak stands to increase oak regeneration potential and meet maintenance objectives. These treatments would be carried out by mechanical mastication and targeted herbicide treatments applied to trees below the main canopy. Herbicide application methods would include directed tree injection and/or basal bark treatments. Oak and hickory species would not be treated with herbicides or during mastication treatments. Treatments would be tailored to the site based on site productivity, with the level or intensity of the midstory reduction decreasing as site productivity increases. This treatment would enhance the light environment in the understory, allowing small oak seedlings to slowly develop into more competitive size classes. Because the treatment is applied to trees below the main canopy, large gaps in canopy are not created, preventing the rapid establishment of shade-intolerant species like yellow poplar from invading and dominating the understory.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 59 Stand 13: 12 ac Yellow poplar-white oak-northern red oak stand, 108 years old
Comp 61 Stand 4: 126 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 122 years old
Comp 62 Stand 13: 35 ac Bottomland hardwood-yellow pine stand, 42 years old

Increasing Oak Regeneration Potential with Midstory Reduction on Moderate to Lower Productivity Mid-Late Successional Oak Sites:

Treatment of the midstory and understory would be employed using a combination of direct herbicide treatments and/or prescribed burning. Initial understory treatments would likely include herbicide applications to control this competition. Herbicide treatments could include directed

foliar, cut stem or basal bark/streamline methods. The composition, size, origin, and density of understory competitors would dictate the herbicide method selected. Once herbicide treatments have been applied, prescribed burning treatments, where feasible, would be used to further reduce competition and to maintain the desired understory environment. Initial prescribed burning would be conducted during the dormant season. Subsequent burn treatments would be applied during the growing season until the desired conditions have been achieved (development of oak reproduction). Periodic burns would be applied using a combination of dormant and growing season treatments and frequency would be altered to allow oak seedling to gain height and prepare for canopy recruitment.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 55 Stand 20: 11 ac chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 55 years old
Comp 59 Stand 11: 9 ac white oak-black oak-yellow pine stand, 104 years old
Comp 59 Stand 30: 34 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 115 years old
Comp 59 Stand 33: 39 ac Upland hardwoods-white pine stand, 125 years old
Comp 59 Stand 36: 24 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 125 years old
Comp 60 Stand 22: 32 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 125 years old
Comp 61 Stand 3: 15 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 44 years old
Comp 61 Stand 7: 24 ac Virginia pine-oak stand, 55 years old
Comp 61 Stand 8: 13 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 115 years old
Comp 62 Stand 4: 14 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 97 years old
Comp 62 Stand 31: 31 ac Shorleaf pine-oak stand, 46 years old
Comp 62 Stand 33: 29 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 96 years old
Comp 62 Stand 46: 37 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 114 years old
Comp 66 Stand 24: 48 ac Chestnut oak-white oak-scarlet oak stand, 101 years old

Maintain or Increase the Dominance and Competitive Stature of Oak:

To maintain or increase the dominance and competitive stature of oak in existing immature oak stands, individual crown-touching tree release treatments would be implemented where oaks are present but are being suppressed by non-oak competitors and where there is a high risk that oak species may drop out of the stand due to competition would be selected. Under this treatment, individual non-oak competitors with crowns that touch selected oak trees would be slashed down with chainsaws, mechanical mastication, or killed using directed herbicide applications (tree injection) to increase/maintain oak domination of the sites. Approximately 70 – 100 oak trees would be selected per acre for individual release within treatment areas.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 63 Stand 32: 10 ac Chestnut oak stand, 44 years old
Comp 64 Stand 2: 27 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 46 years old
Comp 66 Stand 9: 22 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 42 years old
Comp 68 Stand 16: 66 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 15 years old

Prescribed Burns:

Woodall Shoals Rx – Comp 59 Stands 11, 13, 30, 33
Cutting Bone Rx – Comp 60 Stand 22; Comp 61 Stand 4 (partial)
Wolf Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stands 3 (partial), 4 (partial), 7

Deadin Timber Rx – Comp 61 Stand 3 (partial); Comp 62 Stands 4, 13, 31, 33, 46
Stekoa Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stands 4 (partial), 8
Watergauge Rx – Comp 63 Stand 32
Rocky Mountain B Rx – Comp 66 Stand 9
Tallulah Gorge Co-op Rx – Comp 68 Stand 16

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208, and the Middle Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

PDFs 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 10/10/2025

Maintenance of Oak Forest and Competitive Stature of Oak Midstory and Release

Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

0 0.23 0.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles

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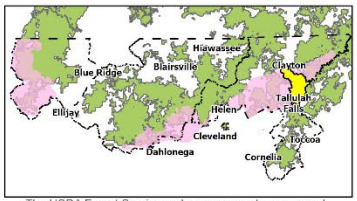

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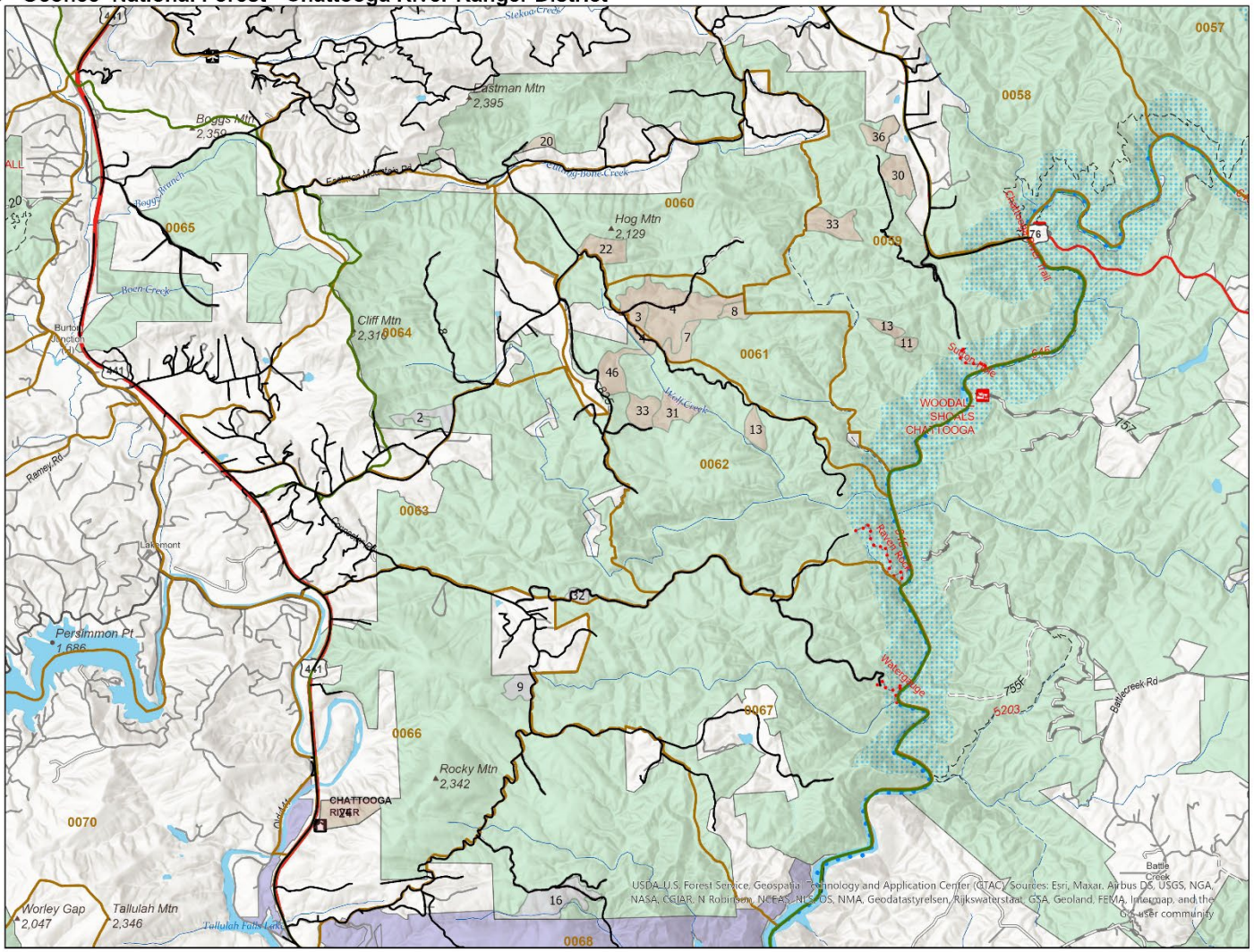


Activity Name: Maintenance of oak forest – expanding gap treatment

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Oak dominated forest types exist on more than 55,000 acres within the Foothills Project area. Over 90% of the oak forest is in late successional stage habitats. There are 0 acres of young oak (less than 10 yrs. within the landscape). A general lack of disturbances in the oak forest community, including fire, has promoted the development of shade-tolerant, fire-sensitive species which are suppressing oak regeneration processes. This problem is most acute on the more productive oak sites but is evident in oaks stands growing on lower productivity sites in many locations as well.

Desired Condition: Conditions within oak stands allow for and perpetuate natural oak regeneration processes to resume so that oak maintain dominance in the future (Forest Plan Objective 3.7).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: There are four specific conditions that would trigger restoration actions:

- Where mid to late successional oak exists on low to moderate productivity sites,
- Where mid to late successional oak exists on moderate to high productivity sites,
- Where mid to late successional oak exists but where prescribed fire cannot be used regularly to achieve desired outcomes, and
- Where immature oak exists in competition with itself or less-desired species.

How to Implement Change: Multiple treatment options are included under this proposal to meet oak maintenance objectives within the landscape - each designed with consideration for site productivity, presence of existing oak regeneration, stand age, and whether connected prescribed fire treatments could be feasibly implemented. The treatments are intended to either: (1) increase oak regeneration potential within existing mid-late successional oak-dominated stands, or (2) increase the dominance of oak in existing immature oak stands. These conditions would help to establish a buffer against mass oak decline and the potential for spongy moth invasion.

A natural gap provides the right environment to produce advanced oak regeneration. The proposed expanding gap treatment would create a similar light environment.

Increasing Oak Regeneration Potential in Mid-Late Successional Oak Stands Where Prescribed Fire Cannot Be Implemented Using Expanding Gap Method:

In oak and oak-pine stands where fire cannot be used regularly, an expanding gap silvicultural method would be used to improve oak regeneration potential in mature oak stands. This method would be implemented on existing mid- to late-successional oak stands within the project area. The expanding gap method is being proposed in collaboration with the Southern Research Station. Gaps would be created in the stands by removing overstory trees to create up to 0.5-acre openings. Initial canopy gaps would be located where advanced oak regeneration exists or where a need for structural diversity is determined and recruitment of oak regeneration is anticipated. After the seedlings are able to compete with surrounding vegetation, the gap would be ready to expand by another one to two tree lengths around the perimeter by removal of the overstory. The surrounding stand would be thinned to a residual basal area of 50 – 70 ft^2/ac. The treatment areas would be treated with herbicides, hand tools, or mechanical mastication to reduce the competition with undesired species.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 62 Stand 40: 53 ac Upland hardwoods-white pine stand, 56 years old
Comp 63 Stand 8: 15 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 63 years old
Comp 64 Stand 33: 43 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 81 years old
Comp 66 Stand 20: 22 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 106 years old
Comp 66 Stand 22: 47 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 101 years old

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Lower Tallulah River HUC - # 030601020108, and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

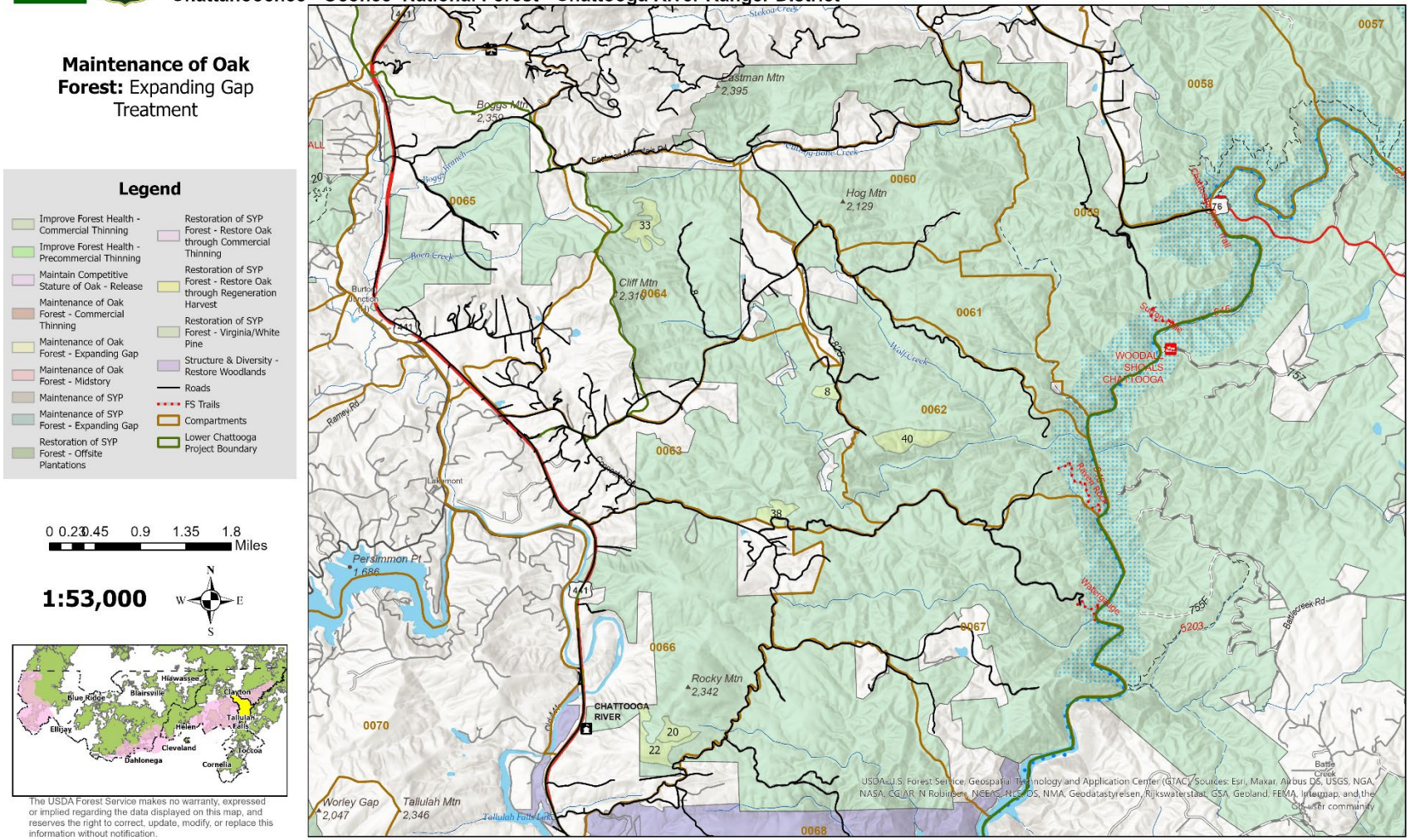
PDFs 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/30/2025

Maintenance of Oak Forest: Expanding Gap Treatment



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Activity Name: Commercial and non-commercial thinning of pine plantations to improve forest health – commercial thinning and pre-commercial thinning

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Within the Foothills Project area, there are nearly 25,000 acres of immature pine plantations highly vulnerable to pine bark beetle infestations due to overstocked stand conditions (Basal Areas > 120 ft^2/acre).

Desired Condition: Stocking/density in pine plantations are reduced to levels that make them more resilient to pine bark beetle infestations (Forest Plan Objective 40.1).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Young, overstocked, even-aged pine stands susceptible to forest pest outbreaks (i.e. ips, bark beetle). WUI (within ¼ mile of USFS boundary at High or Moderate Risk level) would be prioritized when applicable.

How to Implement Change: The project would improve forest health in overstocked pine stands, and would focus on young, overstocked, even-aged pine stands that were established during the last half-century. These pine plantations are proposed for commercial thinning to reduce the risk for bark beetle infestations. Thinning would reduce the basal area to less than 80 ft^2/ac. Using prescribed fire in coordination with thinning treatments would be applied in these areas to best meet restoration objectives. Thinning is also proposed in pine plantations where tree sizes are small. Thinning could include pre-commercial thinning to reduce stocking, improve site resources, and enhance the health and vigor of residual trees.

Comp 62 Stand 09, a loblolly pine-hardwood stand proposed to be commercially thinned for forest health.

Stands Proposed for Commercial Thinning Treatment:

Comp 55 Stand 11: 39 ac Loblolly pine-hardwood stand, 38 years old
Comp 55 Stand 30: 48 ac Loblolly pine-hardwood stand, 31 years old
Comp 55 Stand 36: 25 ac White pine stand, 53 years old
Comp 59 Stand 19: 31 ac Loblolly pine-hardwood stand, 46 years old
Comp 59 Stand 24: 32 ac Loblolly pine stand, 40 years old
Comp 60 Stand 13: 35 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 49 years old
Comp 60 Stand 16: 41 ac Loblolly pine stand, 39 years old
Comp 61 Stand 9: 43 ac Loblolly pine stand, 39 years old
Comp 61 Stand 11: 67 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 71 years old
Comp 62 Stand 3: 56 ac Loblolly pine-hardwood stand, 43 years old
Comp 62 Stand 8: 31 ac Loblolly pine stand, 31 years old
Comp 62 Stand 9: 9 ac Loblolly pine-hardwood stand, 73 years old
Comp 62 Stand 29: 33 ac Loblolly pine stand, 42 years old
Comp 63 Stand 11: 18 ac Loblolly pine-hardwood stand, 36 years old
Comp 67 Stand 34: 150 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 46 years old
Comp 68 Stand 13: 17 ac Virginia pine stand, 31 years old
Comp 68 Stand 26: 29 ac Virginia pine-oak stand, 33 years old
Comp 68 Stand 27: 42 ac Loblolly pine stand, 31 years old

Stands Proposed for Pre-commercial Thinning Treatment:

Comp 55 Stand 35: 37 ac Virginia pine-oak stand, 15 years old
Comp 60 Stand 20: 16 ac Yellow pine stand, 27 years old
Comp 60 Stand 30: 30 ac Virginia pine-oak stand, 27 years old
Comp 64 Stand 13: 31 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 31 years old
Comp 64 Stand 29: 45 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 26 years old
Comp 66 Stand 14: 40 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 33 years old
Comp 68 Stand 29: 20 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 27 years old

Prescribed Burns:

Woodall Shoals Rx – Comp 59 Stands 19, 24
Cutting Bone Rx – Comp 60 Stands 16, 30
Stekoa Creek Rx – Comp 61 Stands 9, 11
Deadin Timber Rx – Comp 62 Stands 3, 8, 9, 29
Camp Creek Rx – Comp 67 Stand 34
Bad Creek B Rx – Comp 68 Stands 13, 26
Stone Place B Rx – Comp 68 Stand 27
Stone Place A Rx – Comp 68 Stand 29 (partial)
Camp Creek A Rx – Comp 66 Stand 14

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210, Middle Chattooga River HUC - #30601020210, and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

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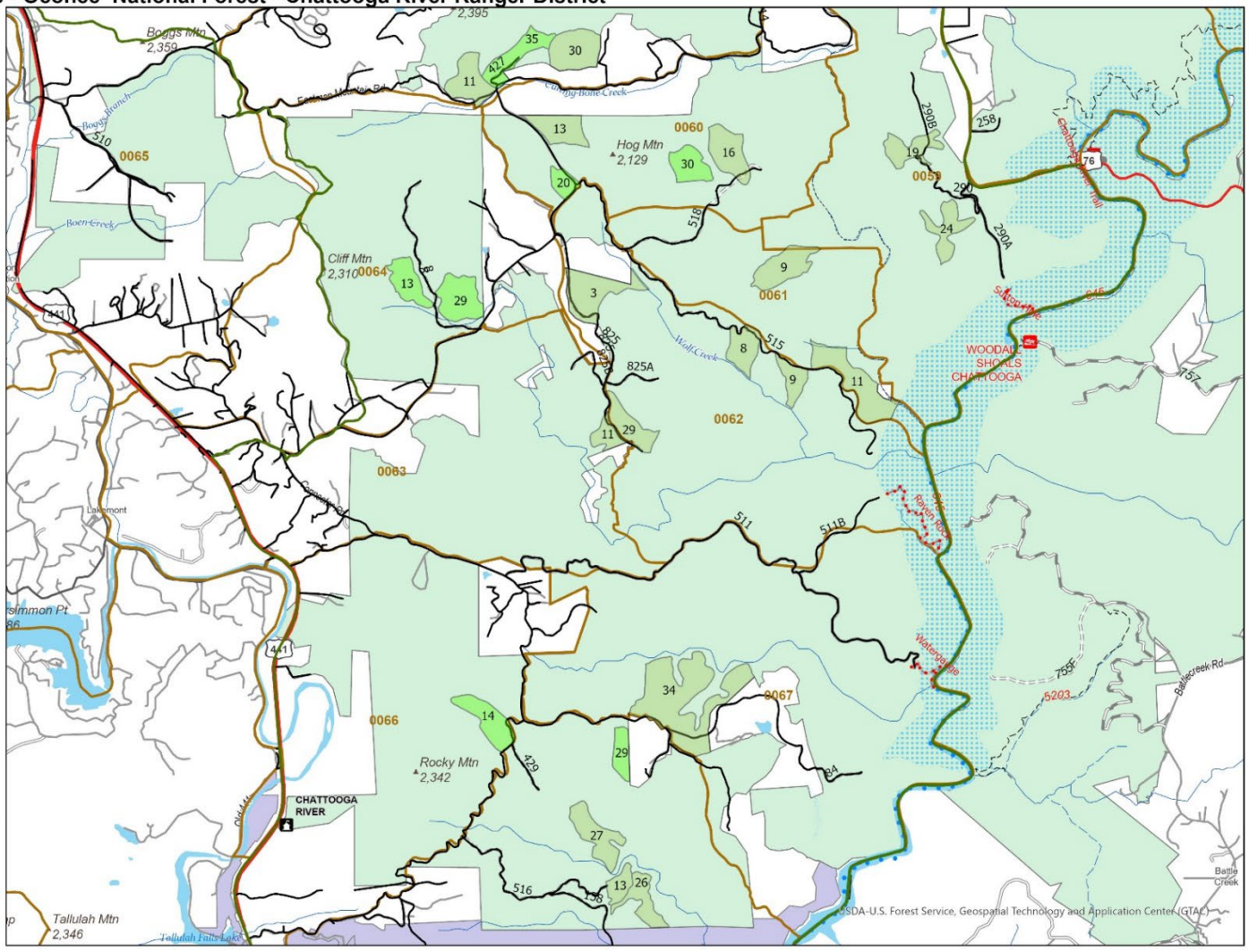
Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 8/6/2025

Thinning of Pine Plantations to Improve Forest Health: Commercial Thinning and Precommercial Thinning



Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

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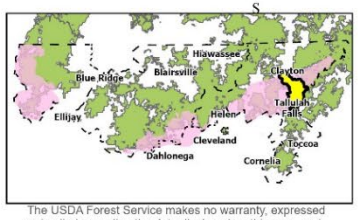


Activity Name: Create young forest by daylighting roads and permanent openings

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Mid-late successional forest dominates the Foothills Landscape (99%) while valuable young forest habitat which is a benefit to wildlife is extremely limited (less than 1%).

Desired Condition: Improved successional stage diversity and distribution of young forest habitats across the landscape on a variety of slopes, elevations, aspects, and forest types. A diversity of habitat will be provided for the full range of native and other desired species (Forest Plan Goal 2).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: This type of treatment would occur in areas, such as the boundaries of permanent openings (wildlife openings, utility corridors, and selected road segments), where opportunities for other young forest treatments are limited, but where the slopes are gentle enough to complete the work.

How to Implement Change: There is an opportunity to create young forest and improve habitat for wildlife by "daylighting" several roads in the project area. Daylighting is the practice of removing the overstory tree canopy within a certain distance from a road or other permanent opening to create young forest and improve road conditions by allowing sunlight to reach the road surface. This type of habitat benefits pollinators as well as many songbirds and other wildlife.

Daylighted roads benefit wildlife by creating young forest habitat and improve road conditions by allowing sunlight to reach the road surface.

This action would include commercial timber harvest of trees within an average of 50 feet of the selected roadbeds, aggregating to a maximum 100-foot-wide corridor along those road segments where commercial operation is feasible. Follow-up treatments may include slashing down non-commercial stems, mastication, and mowing if needed. Approximately 8.2 miles of roads would undergo this treatment, creating approximately 62 acres of young forest habitat. These areas would be allowed to revegetate naturally and may be supplementally planted with native pollinators after project activities are completed. Maintenance of the daylighted roadsides would occur as funding and workforce capacity permits. All daylighting treatments are located in burn units. The following roads are proposed for daylighting:

- FSR - 290 (Woodall Shoals): 1 mile
- FSR - 290A (Sutton Hole): 0.5 miles
- FSR - 515 (Wolf Creek Church): 2.6 miles
- FSR - 518 (John Rowland Br): 1.2 miles
- FSR - 825 (Deadin Timber): 1.8 miles
- Non-system roads east of FSR - 825 (Deadin Timber): 0.3 miles
- Non-system road east of FSR - 515 (Wolf Creek Church): 0.8 miles

There are also several permanent wildlife openings in the project area that are suitable for daylighting. This treatment would include commercial timber harvest of trees within an average of 50 feet of the opening's edge. This action would improve the quality of the opening by allowing sunlight to reach the entire opening and add habitat and browse diversity for those wildlife species that are dependent upon young, dense, brushy habitat including pollinators. Approximately 10 acres of young forest habitat would result from this treatment.

The openings proposed for daylighting include:

- Two openings on the non-system roads east of FSR - 825 (Deadin Timber) in Compartment 62.
- Three openings on the non-system roads east of FSR - 515 (Wolf Creek Church) in Compartment 61.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

Roads and openings proposed for daylighting are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210 and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

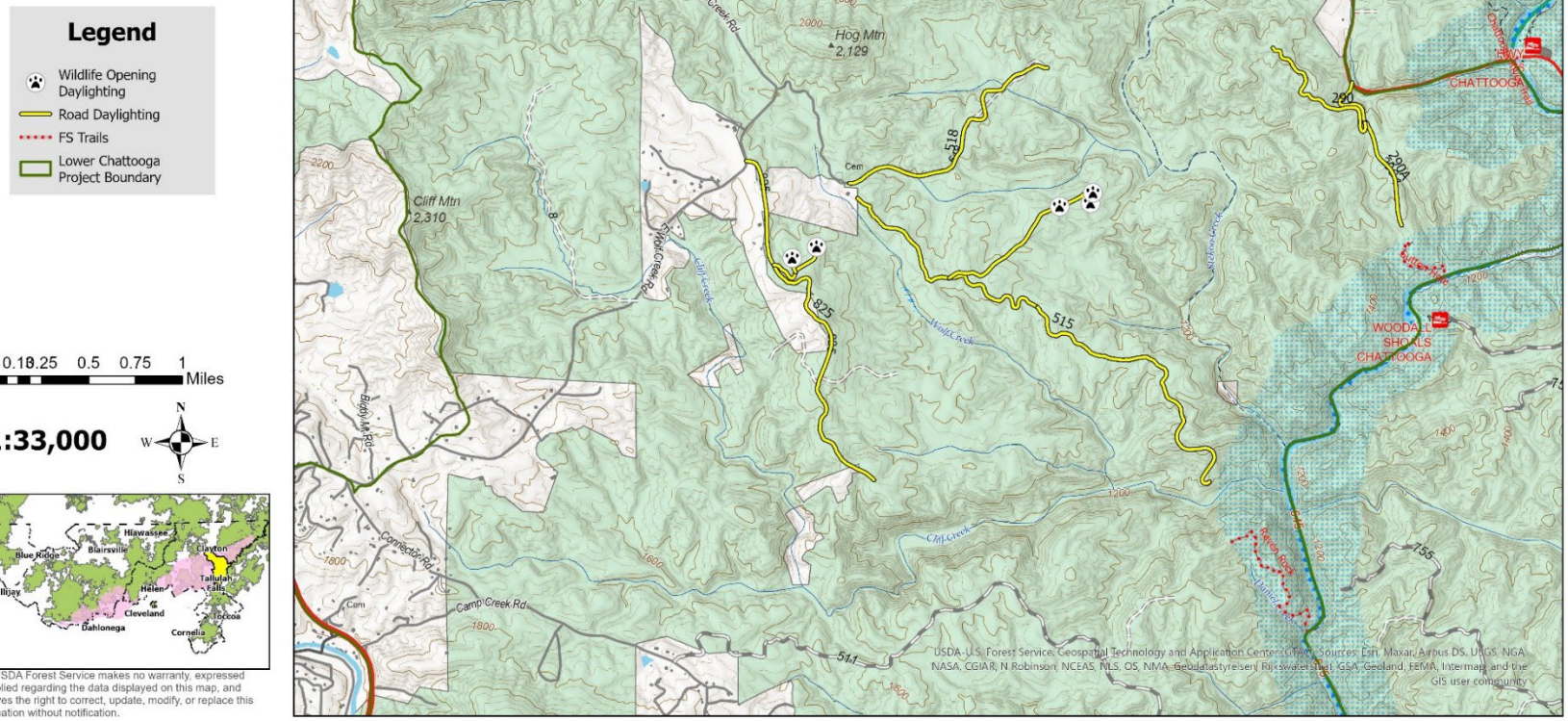
PDFs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/26/2025

Create Young Forest (ESH) by Daylighting Roads and Permanent Openings



Legend

- Wildlife Opening Daylighting
- Road Daylighting
- FS Trails
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

0 0.18.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

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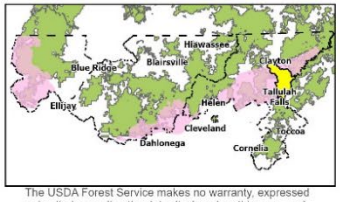

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Activity Name: Restoring open woodland habitats on appropriate sites

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Due to a lack of fire and active management, woodland communities have been invaded by off-site, shade tolerant species that are not fire adapted. Off-site species have resulted in a closed canopy and dense midstory, suppressing regeneration and shading out herbaceous ground cover. Shade tolerant species quickly occupy any canopy gaps and displace fire adapted, woodland species.

Desired Condition: A thin canopy with 20 – 60% canopy cover consisting of fire dependent hardwoods and yellow pine with a well-developed and diverse herbaceous ground cover. (Forest Plan Objective 3.4).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Where woodland species persist (long-lived canopy trees serve as indicators for relic woodland) and combined with desired aspect, elevation, and ability to use prescribed fire.

How to Implement Change: Open woodland blocks would likely require both partial overstory and midstory removal, with a residual basal area of 20 – 40 ft^2/acre, as well as prescribed burning, to start the process of transitioning them from their current conditions to a desired open-habitat type. The need for fire to maintain the woodland structure would necessitate that each woodland block is within a prescribed burning unit, and the site is able to be frequently burned on a one-to-five-year rotation, during both the growing season and dormant season. Herbicide application to control the woody vegetation may also be required if prescribed burning alone is not adequate. Herbicide applications would be directed at undesired woody vegetation and would include a combination of foliar, cut stem, or basal bark/streamline methods.

Comp 62 Stand 07, Proposed for restoring woodland habitat.

All stands proposed for this treatment are within Compartments 62 and 68. Proposed stands fall within existing and new proposed prescribed (Rx) burn units. Sites exhibit woodland characteristics such as low site indices, long lived canopy trees, and herbaceous components in the understory. Proposed woodland treatment areas within the Deadin Timber Rx unit were burned in 2009 and 2024, and treatment areas within the Wolf Creek Rx unit were burned in 2008. Treatment areas within new proposed Rx units have no known burn history.

Stands Proposed for Treatment:

Comp 62 Stand 5: 25 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 77 years old
Comp 62 Stand 7: 27 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 113 years old
Comp 62 Stand 10: 14 ac Chestnut oak-scarlet oak-yellow pine stand, 76 years old
Comp 62 Stand 30: 61 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 81 years old
Comp 62 Stand 44: 43 ac White pine-upland hardwood stand, 95 years old
Comp 62 Stand 48: 12 ac Shortleaf pine stand, 114 years old
Comp 68 Stand 8: 88 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 125 years old
Comp 68 Stand 10: 19 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 94 years old
Comp 68 Stand 17: 124 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 108 years old
Comp 68 Stand 19: 136 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 105 years old
Comp 68 Stand 21: 50 ac Shortleaf pine-oak stand, 97 years old

Prescribed Burns:

Deadin Timber Rx – Comp 62 stands 5, 7 (partial), 10, 30, 44, 48
Wolf Creek Rx – Comp 62 stands 7 (partial)
Stone Place A Rx – Comp 68 stands 8 (partial), 21
Bad Creek A Rx – Comp 68 stands 8 (partial), 10
Stone Place B Rx – Comp 68 stands 17 (partial), 19

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

These stands are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210 and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

PDFs 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21.

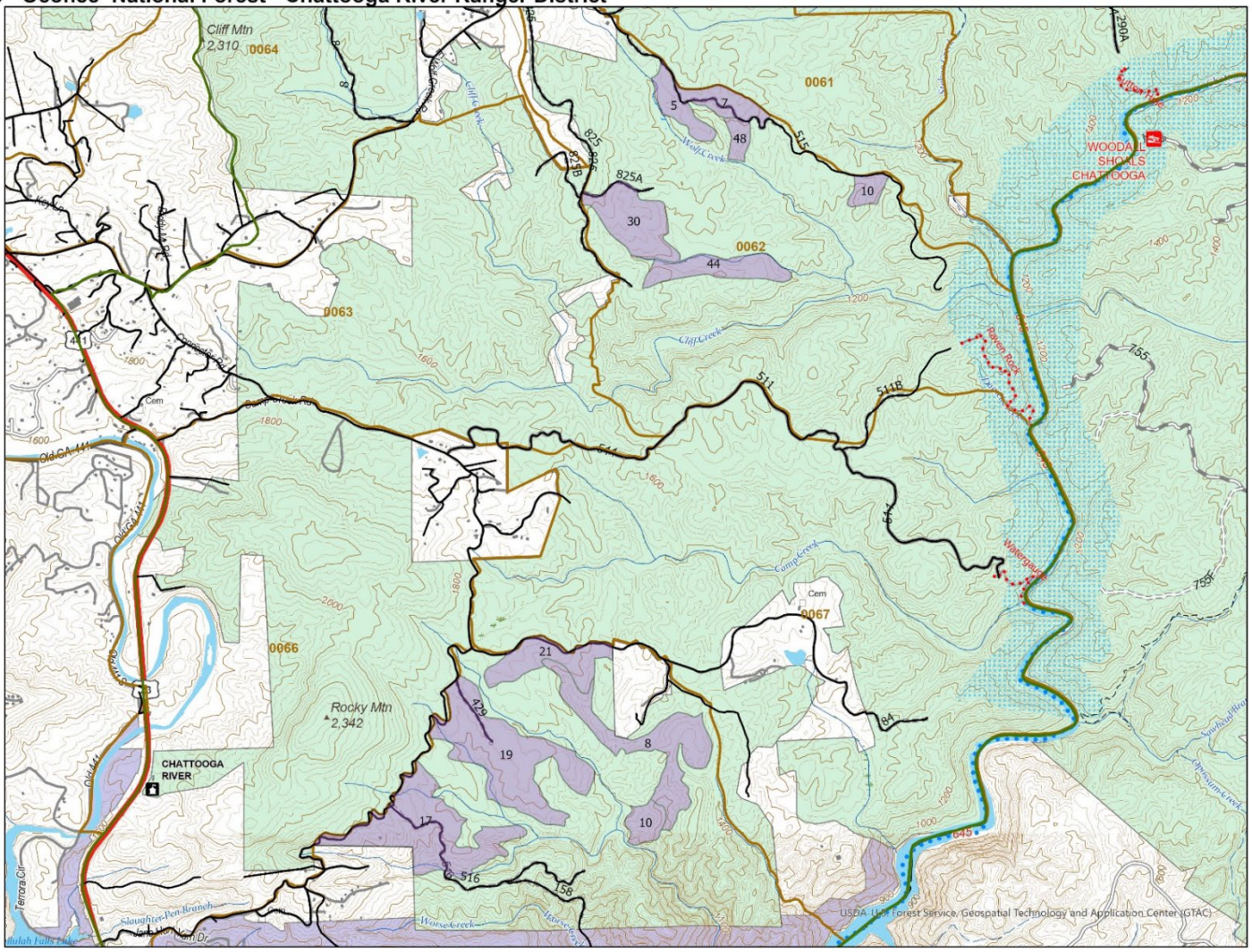
- Trees of the oldest age class and trees exhibiting woodland characteristics will be retained where they fit into the residual basal area to comply with FW-54 and 55 standards to enhance the overall woodland characteristic of the stands.

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 8/6/2025

Restoring Open Woodland Habitats on Appropriate Sites: Commercial Thinning



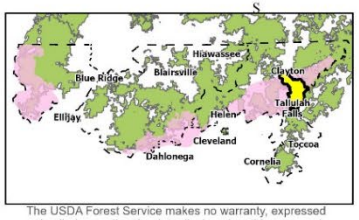
Legend

- Improve Forest Health - Commercial Thinning
- Improve Forest Health - Precommercial Thinning
- Maintain Competitive Stature of Oak - Release
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Commercial Thinning
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Expanding Gap
- Maintenance of Oak Forest - Midstory
- Maintenance of SYP
- Maintenance of SYP Forest - Expanding Gap
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Offsite Plantations
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Commercial Thinning
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Restore Oak through Regeneration Harvest
- Restoration of SYP Forest - Virginia/White Pine
- Structure & Diversity - Restore Woodlands
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

0 0.150.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

1:35,000

N W E S



Activity Name: Create or expand permanent openings

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Mid-late successional forest dominates the Foothills Landscape (99%) while valuable early-successional habitat, which is a benefit to wildlife, is extremely limited (less than 1%). There are currently approximately 7 acres of permanent openings within the Lower Chattooga IA (on National Forest). Permanent openings managed as grass/forb, shrub, or pollinator habitat provide a valuable element of diversity.

Desired Condition: A diversity of habitat will be provided for the full range of native and other desired species…early successional habitat will be well distributed in all forest types, elevations, aspects, and slopes including riparian corridors (Forest Plan Goal 2). Restore 10,000 acres of woodlands, savannahs, grasslands on the Chattahoochee (Forest Plan Objective 3.4).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Where opportunities exist to create or expand openings. New permanent openings are prohibited in riparian corridors. Estimated size would be approximately 1 – 3 acres/ each and primarily connected to harvest activities.

How to Implement Change: There is the potential to create or expand permanent openings on up to 1% of the area within each 6th level HUC unit (sub-watershed) in the Foothills Landscape. This would result in a well-distributed network of permanent openings across the landscape. The edges of the openings would be feathered into the adjacent forest stands for additional value as cover and a food source.

Comp 62 Stand 3, Wildlife opening proposed

for expansion.

Five wildlife openings in the project area are proposed for expansion. All openings range from 0.5 - 1.6 acres in size, within stands proposed for vegetation management, and likely to be utilized as log landings. These 5 openings may be expanded to approximately 15 total acres:

- Two openings on a non-system road east of FSR 825 in Compartment 62 Stand 3
- Three openings on a non-system road east of FSR 515 in Compartment 61 Stand 9

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

All of the openings proposed for expansion are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210 and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A. Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

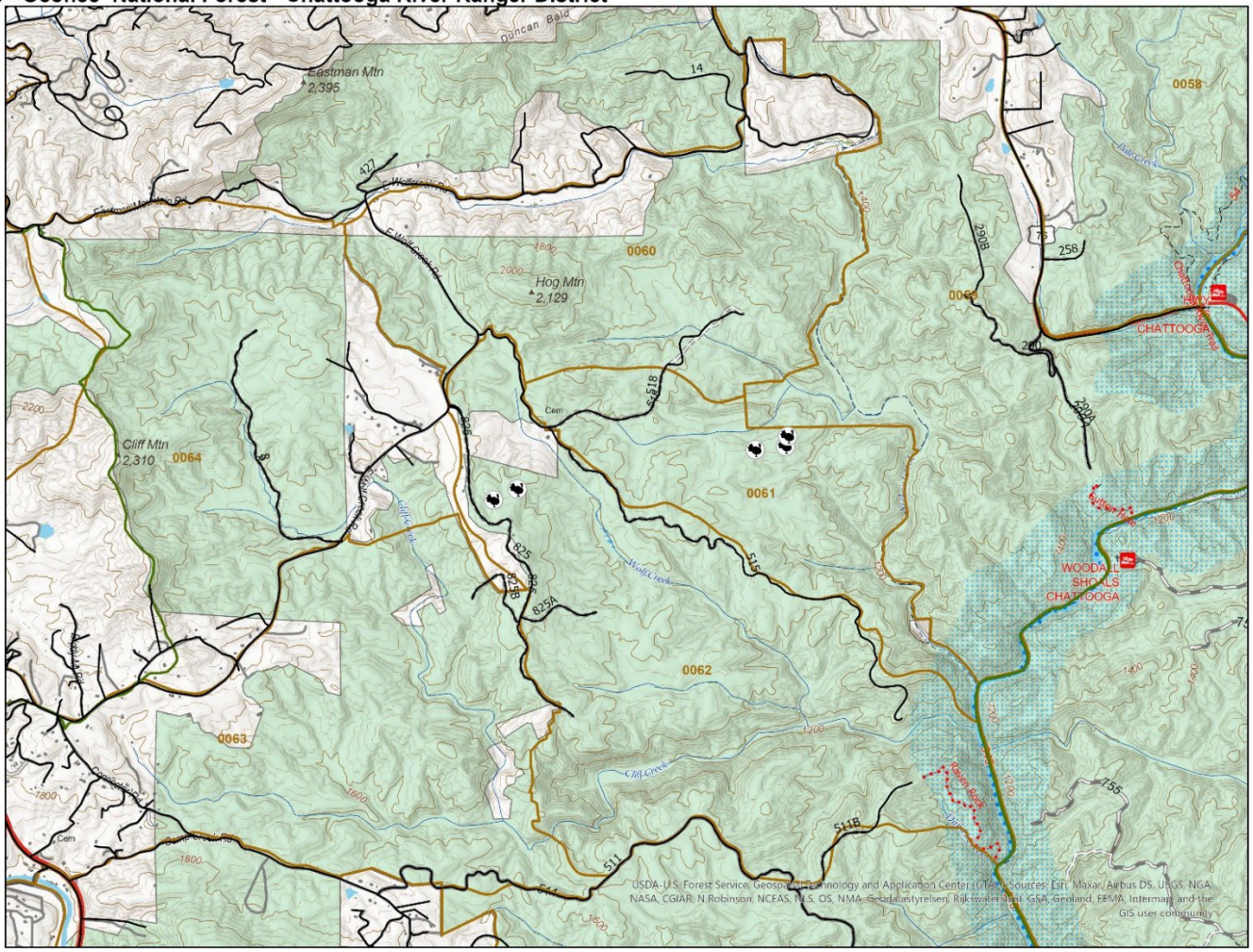
PDFs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/26/2025

Expand Permanent Openings

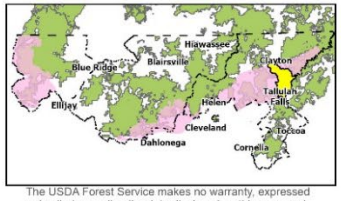


Legend

- Wildlife Opening Expansion
- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

1:33,000



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Activity name: Prescribed fire in new burn blocks to facilitate restoration or maintenance of fire-adapted ecosystems or to reduce hazardous fuels

Detailed Description:
Existing Condition (Need): Approximately 86% of lands within the Lower Chattooga Implementation Area currently fall under FCC3 and are characterized by fire regimes that are significantly altered from their historical range. These lands are at a high risk of losing key ecosystem components. The majority of this area is not covered by existing burn units.

Desired Condition: Expand the role of fire to recover and sustain healthy, fire-adapted ecosystems as much as possible, as a natural process (Forest Plan Goal 61).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Where prescribed burning is required or preferred to meet restoration silvicultural objectives and can be accomplished safely outside of existing burn blocks.

How to Implement Change: Prescribed fire would be used on the Foothills Landscape (in conjunction with silvicultural treatments when appropriate) to trend vegetation toward FCC 2 or 1, to increase the resiliency of forests, and to reduce the forest's susceptibility to insect or disease outbreaks or stand-replacing wildfires. New prescribed fire units may be incorporated into the Foothills Landscape based on proposed vegetation management activities. Burning in mesic stands is not considered part of this action. While a mesic stand could be included within a burn block, the burn plan objectives and the parameters set within that plan decrease the risk that these mesic forest types would burn inadvertently.

Eleven new prescribed burns are proposed in the project area (approximately 6,608 acres):

- Bad Creek Cooperative Rx – 437 acres
- Camp Creek Rx – 356 acres
- Cutting Bone Rx– 803 acres
- Raven Rock Rx – 771 acres
- Rocky Mountain Rx – 722 acres
- Sockem Dog Rx – 507 acres
- Stekoa Creek Rx – 570 acres
- Stone Place Rx – 646 acres
- Stroud Mountain Rx – 112 acres
- Wolf Creek Rx – 119 acres
- Woodall Shoals Rx – 1565 acres

The Bad Creek Cooperative Rx unit is located north of Tallulah Gorge State Park and would be implemented as a cooperative burn with the appropriate state agencies. It is bounded by Tallulah Gorge State Park to the south and Dodge Lane to the northeast. A combination of streams, new dozer line, and new hand line would comprise the remainder of the control lines. The unit may be subdivided into two burn blocks for ease of implementation. A 12-acre parcel of private land is situated within the unit and would be burned under a participating agreement under the Wyden authority. This unit has one oak stand and six pine stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. One of the six pine units is proposed

for shortleaf restoration, and woodland treatment areas are also proposed within this burn unit. This unit would generally be burned on a one-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Camp Creek Rx unit is located north of County Road (CR) 73, Camp Creek Road. It is bounded by CR 73 to the south and west, Camp Creek to the north, and a combination of new dozer line and new hand line to the east. This unit has three pine stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. Two of the three pine units is proposed for shortleaf restoration. This unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Cutting Bone Rx unit is located south of CR 218, East Wolf Creek Road. It is bounded by CR 218 to the west and Stekoa Creek to the east. A combination of Cutting Bone Creek, additional streams, old roadbed, new dozer line, and new hand line would comprise the remainder of the control lines. This unit has three oak stands and eleven pine stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. Three of the eleven pine units are proposed for shortleaf restoration, and one is proposed for oak restoration. This unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Raven Rock Rx unit is located west of the Chattooga River. It is bounded by the Chattooga River to the east, Camp Creek to the south, Cliff Creek to the north, and Forest Service Road (FSR) - 511B and FSR - 511 to the west. Previously utilized dozer line and hand line constitute the remainder of the control lines. This unit has no stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. This unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burn as determined by district staff.

The Rocky Mountain Rx unit is located south and west of CR 73, Camp Creek Road. It is bounded by CR 73 to the north and east and CR 74 Rock Mountain Road to the southeast. A combination of old roadbed and new dozer line would comprise the remainder of the control lines. The unit may be subdivided into three burn blocks for ease of implementation. This unit has two oak stands and three pine stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. Two of the three pine units is proposed for shortleaf restoration. This unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Sockem Dog Rx unit is located west of the Chattooga River. It is bounded by the Chattooga River to the east, Camp Creek to the north, and FSR – 84 (Sockem Dog Road) for a portion of the western boundary. A combination of streams, old roadbed, new dozer line, and new hand line constitutes the remainder of the control lines. This unit has one oak stand and one pine stand proposed for commercial timber harvest. A 117-acre portion of the Sockem Dog Rx unit was last burned in 1995. The Sockem Dog Rx unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Stekoa Creek Rx unit is located north of FSR – 515 (Wolf Creek Church Road). It is bounded by FSR - 515 and Cliff Creek to the south, and Stekoa Creek and the Chattooga River to the East. A combination of streams and previously utilized hand line and dozer line constitute the remainder of the control lines. This unit has one oak stand and six pine stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. Two of the three pine units is proposed for shortleaf restoration, and one is proposed for oak restoration. This unit

would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Stone Place Rx unit is located east of CR 74, Rock Mountain Road. It is bounded by CR 74 to the west, CR 73 to the north, and FSR - 516 and FSR - 158 to the south. A combination of streams, old roadbeds, new dozer line, and new hand line constitute the remainder of the control lines. This unit may be subdivided into two burn blocks for ease of implementation. This unit includes nine pine stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. One of the pine units are proposed for shortleaf restoration, and woodland treatment areas are also proposed within this burn unit. This unit would generally be burned on a one-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Stroud Mountain Rx unit is located north and west of CR 218, East Wolf Creek Road. It is bounded by CR 218 to the south and east, FSR - 14 (Stroud Mountain Road) to the north, and a combination of new dozer line and new hand line to the west. A 1.3-acre parcel of private land is situated along the south end of the unit and would be burned using a participating agreement under the Wyden authority. This unit includes one pine stand proposed for commercial timber harvest. The Stroud Mountain Rx unit was burned in a wildfire when the entire unit was encompassed by the 889-acre Timber Ridge fire in 2016. This unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Wolf Creek Rx unit is located north of FSR – 515 (Wolf Creek Church Road). It is bounded by FSR - 515 to the south and FSR - 518 to the north. A combination of stream, old roadbed, and previously utilized dozer and hand line constitute the remainder of the control lines. This unit includes one pine stand and one oak stand proposed for commercial timber harvest. This unit was burned in 2008 and would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation, varying between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

The Woodall Shoals Rx unit is located west of the Chattooga River. It is bounded by the Chattooga River to the east and south, Stekoa Creek to the west and south, and a small portion of State Hwy 76 to the north. A combination of stream, old roadbed, new dozer line, and new hand line constitute the remainder of the control lines. This unit includes eight pine stands and seven oak stands proposed for commercial timber harvest. Three of the pine units are proposed for shortleaf restoration. This unit would generally be burned on a three-to-five-year rotation and would vary between dormant and growing season burns as determined by district staff.

Connected actions for all new prescribed burns include approximately 13 miles of new dozer line and 1 mile of new hand line construction.

Most fire lines would use existing roadbeds and features such as streambeds and creeks. New fire lines would be bladed with a dozer to create a fuel break or leaf litter would be blown with a leaf blower. In riparian areas, line construction is limited to hand tools and blowers. Fire lines may be improved using a masticator immediately adjacent to the line location to reduce fuel build up next to the line. All line construction would utilize Best Management Practices as outlined in Georgia Forestry Commissions Best Management Practices for Forestry Section 5 and approved prescribed fire plans.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

The new burn units each fall within one or more 6th-level HUCs:

Lower Chattooga River HUC #030601020210
Bad Creek Cooperative Rx
Camp Creek Rx
Cutting Bone Rx
Raven Rock Rx
Rocky Mountain Rx
Sockem Dog Rx
Stekoa Creek Rx
Stone Place Rx
Wolf Creek Rx

Lower Stekoa Creek HUC #030601020208
Cutting Bone Rx
Stekoa Creek Rx
Stroud Mountain Rx
Wolf Creek Rx
Woodall Shoals Rx

Lower Tallulah River HUC #030601020108
Rocky Mountain Rx

Middle Chattooga River HUC #030601020209
Woodall Shoals Rx

MRx(s) where activity would occur: The new burn units each fall within one or more forest management prescription areas:

2.A.1 Designated Wild Rivers
Raven Rock Rx
Sockem Dog Rx
Woodall Shoals Rx

2.A.2 Designated Scenic Rivers
Woodall Shoals Rx

8.A.1 Mid-to Late-Successional Forest Emphasis
Bad Creek Cooperative Rx
Camp Creek Rx
Raven Rock Rx
Rocky Mountain Rx

Sockem Dog Rx
Stone Place Rx
Woodall Shoals Rx

9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas
Cutting Bone Rx
Stekoa Creek Rx
Stroud Mountain Rx
Wolf Creek Rx
Woodall Shoals Rx

9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations
Raven Rock Rx

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

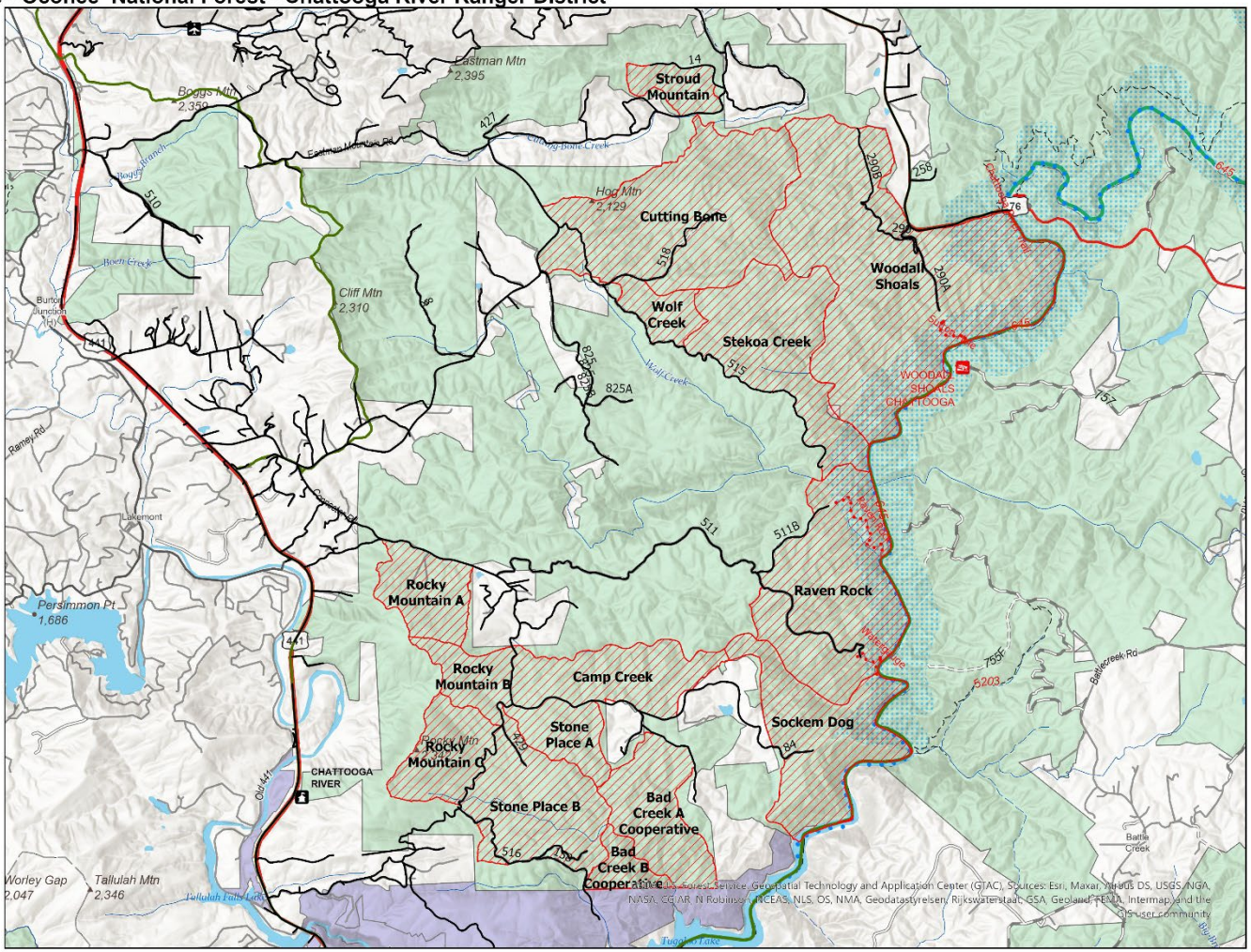
PDFs 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/26/2025

Prescribed Fire in New Burn Blocks to facilitate Restoration or Maintenance of Fire-adapted Ecosystems or to Reduce Hazardous Fuels



Legend

- Roads
- FS Trails
- New Burn Blocks
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary

0 0.23 0.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles

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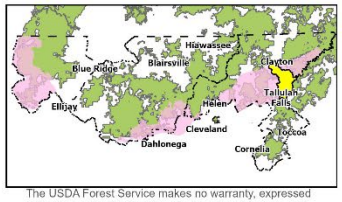
N W E S



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Activity Name: Decommissioning of maintenance level (ML) 2 and ML 1 system roads

Detailed Description:
Existing Condition (Need): Road density on Forest Service lands is moderate to high (0.8 - >1.6 miles/mile^2) in over half of the landscape. The Forest currently does not receive enough funding or capacity to maintain these roads at their current management classifications**.** FSR - 511B (Raven Rock) from MP 0.9 to MP 1.4 is a maintenance level (ML) 1 road, closed year-round to the public and is currently used as trail.

Desired Condition: A transportation system which supplies the public, Forest Service, and other authorized users with safe, environmentally sustainable, equitable, financially sound, and operationally effective access to roaded portions of the project area. (LRMP Goal 47**)**

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Identified roads that are not necessary for management or sustainable to maintain in their current condition.

How to Implement Change: The section of FSR - 511B identified for decommissioning under the Foothills EA has already been physically decommissioned, and the road status needs to be updated on the Forest's motor vehicle use map. The data update would reflect that FSR - 511B from MP 0.9 to MP 1.4 is permanently closed to vehicular traffic. The existing gate would be replaced with an earthen barrier.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned: The section of FSR 511B planned for decommissioning is in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

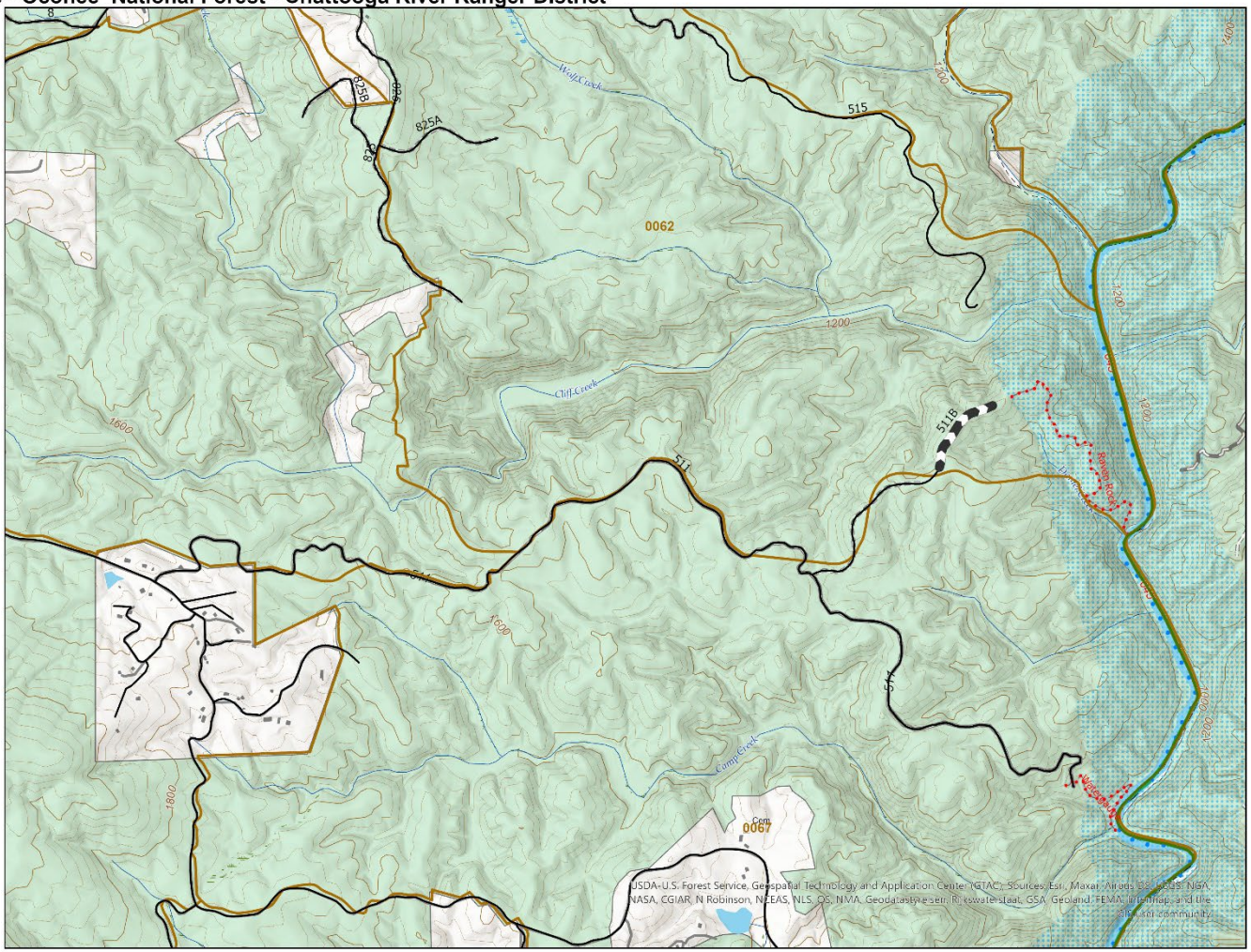
PDFs 12 and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/26/2025

Decommissioning of Maintenance Level (ML) 2 and ML 1 System Roads -
FSR 511B Raven Rock Rd



Legend

- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary
- FSR 511B (Raven Rock)

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 0.45 0.6 Miles

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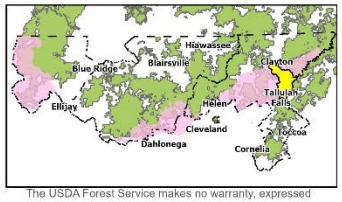

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Activity Name: Implement changes to system road maintenance level (ML) and/or use restrictions

Detailed Description:

Existing Condition (Need): Road density on Forest Service lands is moderate to high (0.8 - >1.6 miles/mile^2) in over half of the landscape. The CONF currently does not receive enough funding or capacity to maintain these roads at their current management classifications. The existing conditions for pertinent roads within the Implementation Area include:

- FSR - 8 (Upper Cliff Creek) from MP 0.0 to MP 1.4 is a ML 2 road, open to the public year-round and is used 1-2 times per year for administrative purposes.
- FSR - 14 (Stroud Mountain) from MP 0.0 to MP 0.7 is a ML 2 road, open year-round to public access and is used 1-2 times per year for administrative purposes.
- FSR - 84 (Sockem Dog) from MP 0.0 to MP 0.75 is a ML 2 road, open to the public year-round and is used 1-2 times per year for administrative purposes and for search and rescue.
- FSR - 429 (Upper Bad Creek) from MP 0.0 to MP 0.9 is a ML 2 road, open to the public year-round and is used 1-2 times per year for administrative purposes.
- FSR - 825A (Hollifield Place) from MP 0.0 to MP 0.5 is a ML 2 road, open to the public year-round and is used 1-2 times per year for administrative purposes.
- FSR - 825B (Timber West Spur) from MP 0.0 to MP 0.75 is a ML 2 road, open to the public year-round and is used 1-2 times per year for administrative purposes.

Desired Condition: A transportation system which supplies the public, Forest Service, and other authorized users with safe, environmentally sustainable, equitable, financially sound, and operationally effective access to roaded portions of the project area. (LRMP Goal 47**).**

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Identified roads that are not sustainable to maintain in their current condition or at their current ML.

How to Implement Change: For FSRs 14, 84, 429, 825A, and 825B, the reduction of ML from ML 2 to ML 1 reflects these roads' current condition and an appropriate level of maintenance based on their frequency of use and condition. The Forest's motor vehicle use map would be updated with these ML adjustments. The seasonal use restriction on FSR-8 would be implemented by closing a gate at the entrance of the road for 3-6 months out of the year and updating the motor vehicle use map with seasonality information.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned: The sections of FSR 14, 429, 825A, 825B, 8, and 84 that are planned for reduction in ML are in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210 and the Lower Stekoa Creek HUC - #030601020208.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 8.A.1 Mix of Successional Forest Habitats, 9.A.3 Watershed Restoration Areas, and 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential.

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply.*

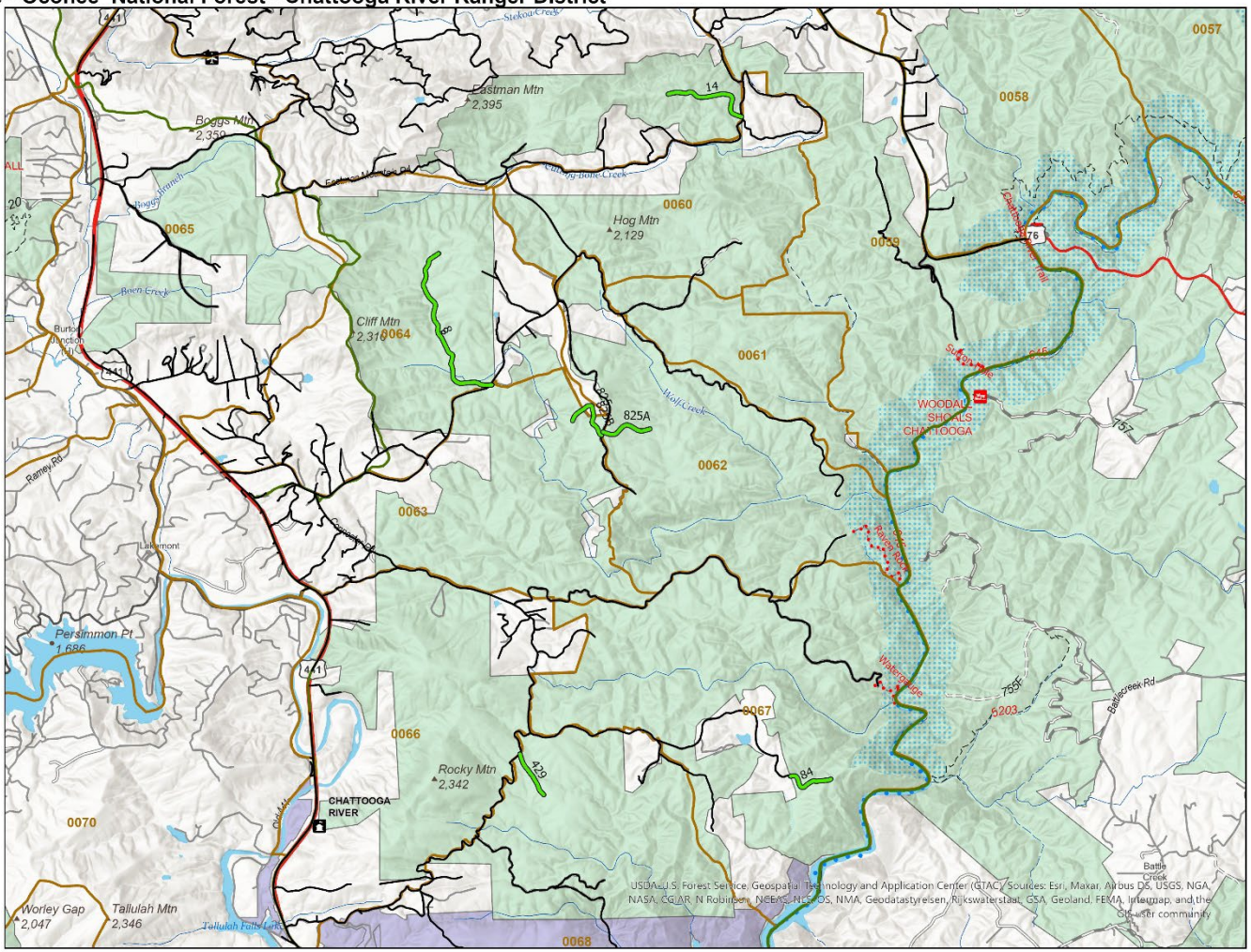
PDFs 12 and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 9/26/2025

Implement changes to system road maintenance level (ML) and/or use restrictions

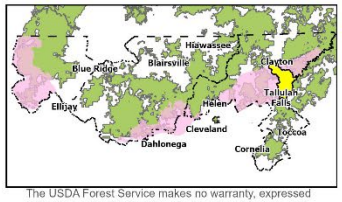


Legend

- Roads
- FS Trails
- Compartments
- Lower Chattooga Project Boundary
- System Road Maintenance and/or Seasonal Changes

0 0.23 0.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles

1:53,000



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Activity Name: Reconstruction of existing roads that are causing sedimentation to streams, particularly within watersheds with 305b and 303d listed streams

Detailed Description:
Existing Condition (Need): Twenty-eight percent of the total road length in the Foothills Landscape is located within 300 of stream channels. Most of the 305(b) and 303(d) listed streams within the Foothills Landscape have road segments encroaching the 300 ft. stream buffer.
FSR - 8 (Upper Cliff Creek) is a 1.4-mile maintenance level 2 road that is planned to have reconstruction activities implemented along its length where needed. This action would bring the condition of this road back into Forest Service standards and reduce sediment inputs into Cliff Creek.

Desired Condition: Roads do not adversely affect soil and water resources. (LRMP Goal 48).

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: Where system roads are in need of repair to address soil and water quality and/or in watersheds with 303 (d) or 305 (b) listed streams or streams with Threatened and Endangered species habitat.

How to Implement Change: It is proposed to improve the condition of existing roads including culverts, stream crossings, surface material, and configuration using recommendations in the Riparian Restoration, Roads Field Guide (USFS 2005) and Georgia's Better Backroads Field Manual (Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. 2009). Priority considerations for road improvements would be given to roads contributing excess sediment to waterways, where access needs and or safety hazards are greatest.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned:

This road is in the Lower Chattooga River HUC - #030601020210.

MRx(s) where activity would occur: 9.H Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations

Resource Project Design Features: Do project activities follow all listed resource-specific PDFs in Step 2?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** (If no, document if additional analysis per NEPA is triggered and if so, analysis is referenced and/or attached prior to finalization.)

Additional Project Design Features: *Add any additional Project Design Features necessary to avoid significant impacts. Use list at end of this plan in Attachment A to guide selection of all that apply. List PDF numbers.*

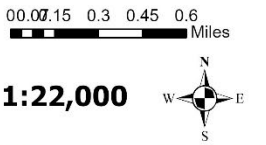
PDFs 12, 16, 17, and 21

Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project

Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District

Map Creation Date: 10/10/2025

Reconstruction of existing roads that are causing sedimentation to streams, particularly within watersheds with 305b and 303d listed streams



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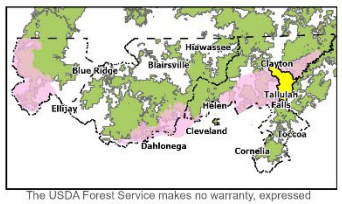

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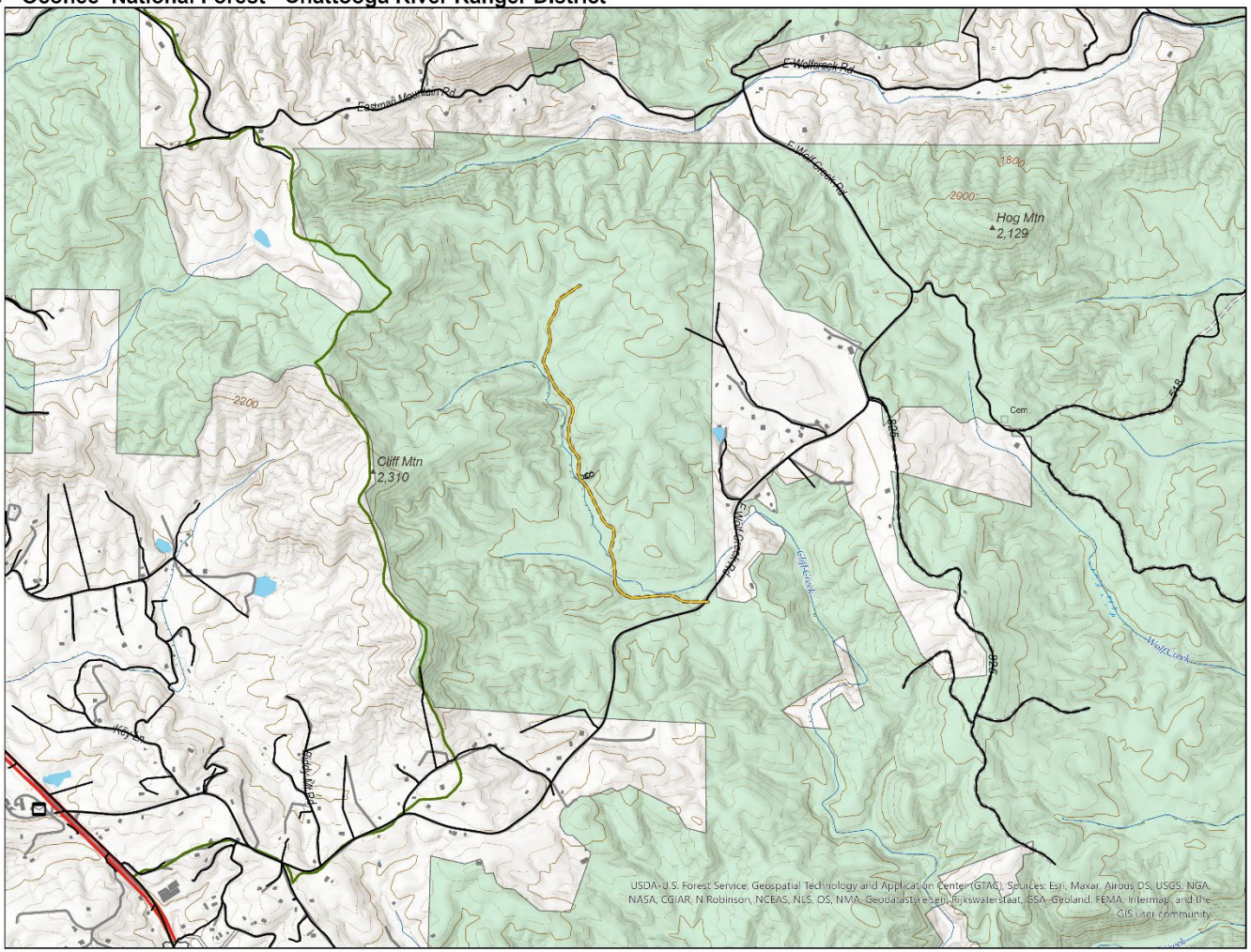


Attachment A: Project Design Features

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
PDF 1: All Restoration Actions that Use Herbicides	No herbicide is ground applied within 100 feet of lakes, wetlands, streams, except for aquatic-labeled herbicides to prevent significant environmental damage	Forest Plan Standard FW-022
	Herbicide mixing, loading, or cleaning areas in the field are not located in sensitive areas as identified in the project decision document, or within 200 feet of private land, open water, or wells (or ephemeral streams FW-024)	Forest Plan Standard FW-023
	No soil active herbicide with a half-life longer than three months is broadcast within 25 feet of ephemeral streams. Selective treatments with aquatic-labeled herbicides are allowed. Such areas are clearly marked before treatment so that applicators can easily see and avoid them.	Forest Plan Standard FW-025
	Site-specific analysis of proposed management actions will identify any protective measures needed in addition to Forest Plan standards, including increasing the width of protective buffers where needed.	Forest Plan Standard FW-029
	Milkweed species would be avoided during herbicide spraying.	FLP Specific
	Pesticide Use – See Appendix B, Attachment 1 of the Vegetation Specialist Report	FLP Specific
PDF 2: Old growth stands, at the time of implementation, that meet minimum age criteria for old-growth based on Old-Growth Type	Non-conserved "possible old-growth", defined as stands meeting the minimum age criteria for their respective Old-Growth Type that are not currently conserved by Management Prescription or through small block allocations associated with this alternative, would be assessed prior to implementation of project activities within these areas to determine if they meet the other defining criteria for old-growth conservation. If so, these areas would be conserved for old- growth. Management actions that conflict with old-growth characteristics, as described by the Forest Plan, would not be permitted in areas conserved. The exception would be for Old-Growth Types 22 and 24.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 046 FWS – 054)
PDF 3: All vegetation management actions in all conditions	During all vegetation management activities, dogwoods and other soft-mast producers would be reserved from treatment, where practicable and to the extent compatible with meeting treatment objectives	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 008) and FLP Specific
PDF 4: All vegetation treatments that include Oak regeneration (2,000 acres) or mesic hardwood regeneration (500 acres) treatments	Oak-dominated forest types on mesic sites would not be converted to pine-dominated cover types, but could be managed as mixed oak-pine forest types	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 004)
	For areas proposed for mesic hardwood regeneration to create young forest habitats, regeneration treatments would be limited to yellow poplar-dominated stands or stands dominated by other non-oak cover hardwood associates. This would include Forest Types 50, 56, 58 and/or 41.	FLP Specific
PDF 5: All vegetation treatments that include regeneration harvests (yellow pine restoration, oak restoration, oak regeneration, mesic hardwood regeneration)	When regeneration treatments are applied, sites would be regenerated to native tree species that commonly occur or historically occurred naturally on ecologically comparable sites within the same ecological section.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 001)
	Stands dominated by Eastern hemlock would not be subject to regeneration treatments.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 002)

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	Even-aged or two-aged regeneration areas in or adjacent to deciduous or mixed forests must include a 50-foot zone along mature forest edges in which intensity of silvicultural treatment decreases, resulting in a feathered edge.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 007)
	The maximum size of an opening created by even-aged or two-aged regeneration treatments is 40 acres. For yellow pine, 80 acres is permitted if restoration requires larger openings.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 086)
	Openings created by even-aged regeneration or two-aged regenerations harvest units shall be separated from each other by a minimum of 330 feet (5 chains). However, such openings may be clustered closer than 330 feet as long as their combined acreage does not exceed the maximum opening size (40 acres). An opening created by regeneration harvest would no longer be considered an opening when the re-established stand reaches five years in age.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 087)
	Regenerated stands shall meet the minimum stocking standards for the intended/desired forest type within five years after final harvest cut, as listed in the Forest Plan Table 2-5.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 089)
	In even-aged and two-aged regeneration, retain all snags unless they are an immediate hazard. Sales would be designed to avoid snag removal if possible (skid trails, landings). Retain (or create) five snags per acre: near the forest edge if possible. In even-aged and two-aged regeneration stands larger than 10 acres, maintain a minimum of 15 sq. feet of basal area. These could be arranged in clumps, corridors, or feathered edges. In stands over 10 acres treated as seed tree or shelterwood, maintain a minimum of 20 sq. feet of basal area. Retain all trees within 20 feet of five snags per acre for windthrow protection and snag recruitment	Forest Plan Standard (FWS 091).
PDF 6: All Prescribed Fire in all Conditions	When necessary, to include mesic deciduous forests within prescribed burning blocks as part of burning other adjacent fire-dependent forest types, only low intensity fires are permitted, except when prescribed burns are designed to encourage oak regeneration in mesic oak forests. Exclude such mesic areas lacking a significant oak component from burn units, unless by doing so, it would result in: (1) failure to meet other prescribed fire objectives, or (2) more than 30% increase in plowed or bladed fire-line construction per burn unit.	Forest Plan Standard (FWS – 191 and FSW – 0190)
PDF 7: All mechanical vegetation management	Skidding would not occur within riparian corridors, except for at designated crossings.	GA BMP
	No heavy equipment, other than mechanical fellers, would be allowed to operate within the riparian corridors during harvest activities. The exception to this would be at designated crossings.	GA BMP
	Once the temporary roads, log landings, and skid trails are no longer needed, they would be closed to normal vehicle traffic so that illegal use is discouraged. The closures may include installation of an earthen barrier, re-contouring, decompaction, placement of logging debris along the road surface, seeding or placement of boulders.	FLP Specific
	Log landings and skid trail locations would be evaluated and approved by the Forest Service prior to harvesting in order to ensure that they are placed in locations with adequate drainage and away from sensitive soils or riparian areas as per the Georgia State BMP	FLP Specific

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	recommendations.	
	Skidding and decking would be limited to designated and approved routes along ridges and gentle slopes to protect sensitive soils. Skidding would not be allowed on sustained slopes over 35%. Coordination will be completed when skid trails and decking coincide with system trails.	FLP Specific
	No tree removal may occur within 0.25 mile of a known NLEB hibernaculum at any time of the year (NLEB 4d rule) unless agreed to during consultation with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	FLP Specific (ESA Consultation)
	No tree removal may occur within a 150-foot radius of known, occupied NLEB roost trees during June or July each year (NLEB 4d rule) unless agreed to during consultation with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	FLP Specific (ESA Consultation)
	Protect known Indiana bat or other endangered bat roosts from cutting or modification until they are no longer suitable as roost trees.	Forest Plan Standard FW-233
	Snags are not intentionally felled from April 1 through August 31 (exceptions may be made for safety, insects, and disease).	Forest Plan Standard FW-235
	Non-silvicultural projects removing trees or snags (fireline construction, rec projects, hazard tree removal) should be completed during September 1-March 31. This applies to the parts of the forest that provides “suitable” habitat for Indiana bat roosting (GIS analysis).	Forest Plan Standard FW-236
	In all silvicultural treatments, retention priority is given to the largest available trees with favorable characteristics as bat roost trees (yellow pines and oaks with crevices, cracks, or hollows).	Forest Plan Standard FW-237
	Compliance with standards FW-90, 91, 233-237 will be monitored and report submitted annually to USFWS. Report will include acres of timber harvest and prescribed burning; time of year accomplished.	Forest Plan Standard FW-238
	Mature forest cover is maintained within 100 feet from the top of cliffs and 200 feet from the base of cliffs.	Forest Plan Management Prescription 9.F-017
	Vegetation management activities would not utilize existing trails as access routes without a review by recreation staff. Trails used would be restored to the original trail width and characteristics if determined appropriate per sustainable recreation objectives. Blaze trees that define the trail corridor would not be cut unless to mitigate safety concerns.	FLP Specific
	Layout of regeneration areas would incorporate a no-harvest zone between unit boundaries and open Forest system roads that have a HIGH scenic integrity objective.	FLP Specific
	Layout of regeneration areas by design would leave areas un-harvested along prominent ridgelines and/or sites of higher elevation that have a HIGH or MODERATE scenic integrity objectives to reduce “sky-lighting” effects and to obscure areas of lower elevation in regeneration.	FLP Specific
	Logging equipment must be inspected and found to be clean (free of vegetative debris) seed, soils, etc. upon arrival to timber sale areas.	FLP Specific
	Known NNIS infestations must be shown on timber sale area maps. Ensure that equipment washing clauses are included in all ground-disturbing contracts and sales documents, and that clauses are discussed in pre-work conferences.	FLP Specific
	When possible, significant infestations of NNIS along planned access routes would be pre-	FLP Specific

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	treated systematically within timber sale areas in order to prevent the spread of NNIS into new areas.	
	Skidding through known populations of NNIS should be avoided to reduce the potential for spread.	FLP Specific
PDF 8: All mechanical vegetation and prescribed fire treatments	Coordinate with district recreation staff to post advance notices when trails or recreation sites are to be closed during harvest operations and prescribed burning.	FLP Specific
	Trails treads, roads, or facilities would be rehabilitated to pre-existing condition if damaged during project operations, in coordination with district recreation staff.	FLP Specific
	Vegetation treatments that occur within or adjacent to developed sites, dispersed sites, or trails would be coordinated with local recreation /facility staff to protect facility and lessen impacts to visitors to the extent possible. Project activities that occur within or adjacent to developed sites, dispersed sites, or trails would be conducted outside the major use season whenever possible, with the understanding that most facilities are open year-round. Developed sites will be temporarily closed for visitor protection during active operations. Portions of sites and trails may be temporarily closed for visitor protection or possible restrictions placed on silvicultural activities during times of high use.	FLP Specific
	Where possible, while implementing proposed treatments, make improvements within recreation sites and along system trails. Examples include cleaning up logs and debris from past projects, removing hazard trees surrounding developed sites, and/or cutting existing stumps to less than six inches.	FLP Specific
	Harvest facilities such as temporary roads and landings, and fireline construction will be assessed for continued use to meet other resource needs (i.e., additional trailhead parking, loop trails, wildlife openings, etc.)	FLP Specific
PDF 9: Prescribed Fire Treatments in all Conditions	Minimize the amount and concentration of smoke entering populated areas; prevent/ minimize public health and safety hazards, including impacts to sensitive sites (schools, hospitals, etc.), visual impacts on highways, airports, etc. (both day and night); avoid exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); and protect visibility in Class 1 areas	USDA Forest Service Southern Region's Smoke Management Guidelines
	All activities will meet the requirements of applicable regulations established in pursuit of state or federal air quality goals. While the Forest Service cannot unilaterally guarantee the quality of air (generally, or at a specific point) within an airshed, it does ensure that its management activities would be conducted with full adherence to pollution control methodologies and technologies prescribed by air quality regulatory agencies.	Forest Plan Standard FW-230
	In leases and other agreements that permit other parties to use Forest land or resources, the Forest Service will require the permittee to meet the requirements of all applicable regulations established in pursuit of state or federal air quality goals.	Forest Plan Standard FW-231
	The Forest Service will assess relevant aspects of air quality within the Forest, either through its own efforts, in cooperation with other agencies, or by review of the results of other agency monitoring in/near the Forest.	Forest Plan Standard FW-232
	Adhere to Forest Service Manual 5100 Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 5140 Hazardous Fuel Management and Prescribed Fire, Chattahoochee-Oconee Supplement, as amended, regarding parameters to consider when developing a prescribed fire burn plan. Parameters	Forest Service Manual 5100 Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 5140 Hazardous Fuel

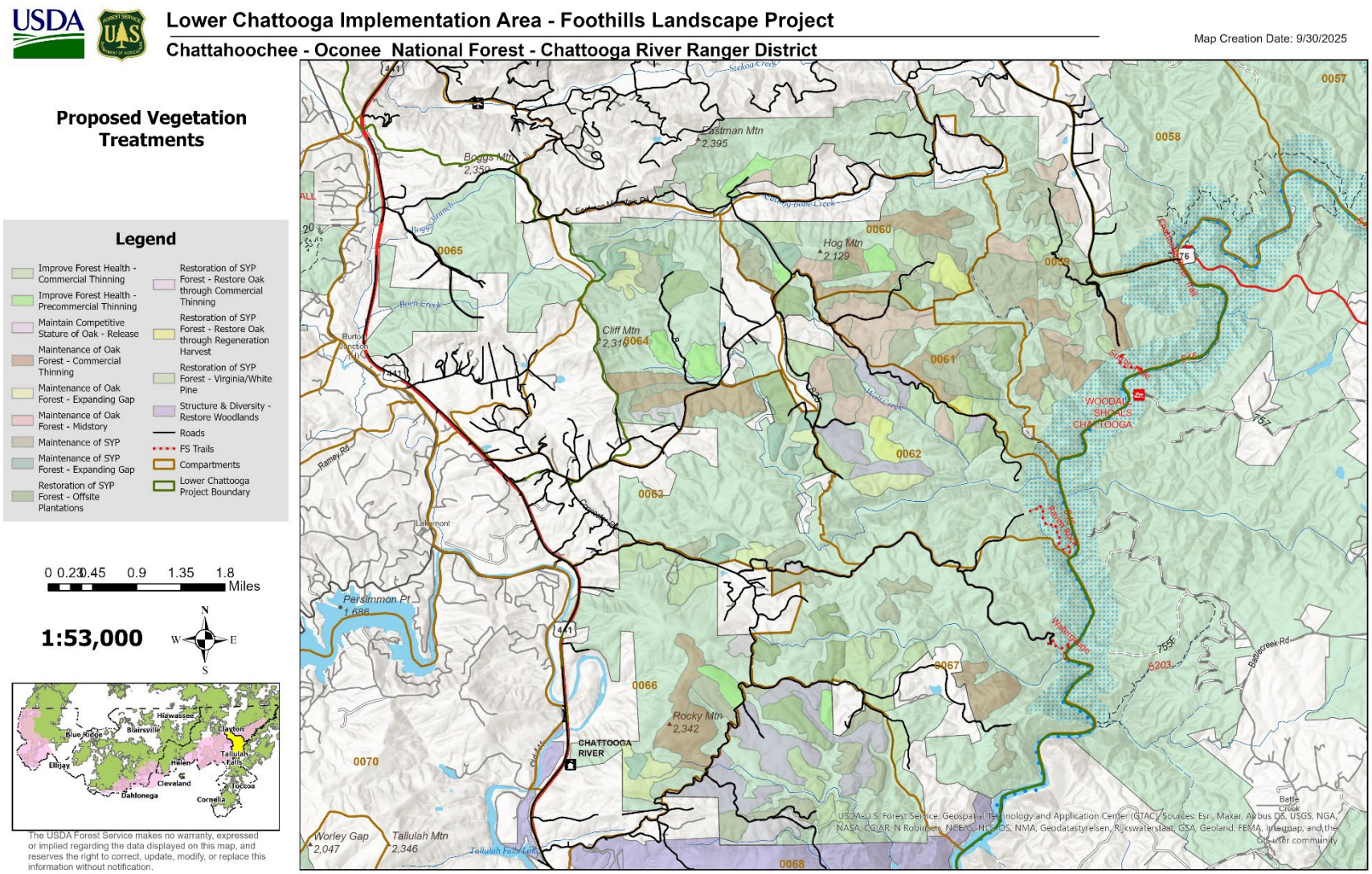
PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	include, but are not limited to: fuel moisture, relative humidity, wind speeds, Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI), days since rain, temperatures, and probability of ignition.	Management and Prescribed Fire, Chattahoochee-Oconee Supplement R8-5100-2009-1
	Basic mesic forests are excluded from prescribed burning blocks where this can be accomplished without large increases in fireline construction. When necessary, to include mesic deciduous forests within burning blocks, direct firing will not be done within these communities unless necessary to secure control lines. In these cases, only low intensity fires are allowed.	Forest Plan Management Prescription 9.F-016
	Locate and construct firelines to minimize mineral soil exposure by utilizing natural barriers, installing firebreaks along the contour, installing proper water diversions, and using gradual grades as outlined in the Forest Plan and Georgia's BMP Handbook. Establish a vegetative cover as soon as possible to reduce erosion and sedimentation.	GA BMP
	Prescribed burn plans written for areas near caves or mines that contain bats identify these sites as smoke sensitive targets and plan to avoid smoke entering cave or mine openings when bats are present.	Forest Plan Standard FW-034
PDF 10: All activities within Ephemeral Zones (the area within 25 feet on either side of ephemeral streams)	Implement current Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control (Chapter 391-3-6) for all projects as a minimum to meet water quality objectives. GA BMPs for Forestry would be met or exceeded to meet water quality objectives for all activities. Consistent with GA BMP (2019 p. 21), silvicultural activities should: • Minimize soil disturbance, litter layer removal, and avoid high-intensity fire within ephemeral areas. These activities can increase the possibility of introducing pollutants to intermittent or perennial streams. • Cover inadvertently exposed soils with logging debris, grass, or mulch. • Minimize equipment trafficking within and around ephemeral areas. Should trafficking be justifiable due to site constraints, take precautions to minimize soil disturbance and litter layer removal. Placement of logging debris or logging mats in traffic areas may be appropriate. Debris, mats, and other soil protecting structures should not interfere with the natural flow of water. • Avoid direct tie-in of turnouts and outfall of water bars/breaks to ephemeral areas. Extra care should be taken where a skid trail crosses an ephemeral area.	Forest Plan Standard FW-070, GA BMPs
	Motorized vehicle use in ephemeral stream zones is restricted to designated crossings. Motorized vehicles are allowed outside designated crossings on a case-by case basis when vehicle entry would create less ground disturbance than cable winching.	Forest Plan Standard FW-077
	Partial suspension is required when yarding logs over ephemeral streams, unless an improved crossing is used, e.g., culvert or bridge.	Forest Plan Standard FW-079
	Temporary culverts or bridges will be used to cross ephemeral streams where needed to protect channel stability or minimize erosion or scouring. Culverts will be removed when activities are completed, and the ephemeral stream zone will be restored to a natural condition. Stabilize disturbed soils at crossings.	Forest Plan Standard FW-082
	Recreation trails, campsites, and other permanent recreational developments are located, designed, and constructed outside the ephemeral stream zone (25 feet on each side). Those causing unacceptable resource damage will be closed and/or rehabilitated.	Forest Plan Standard FW-083

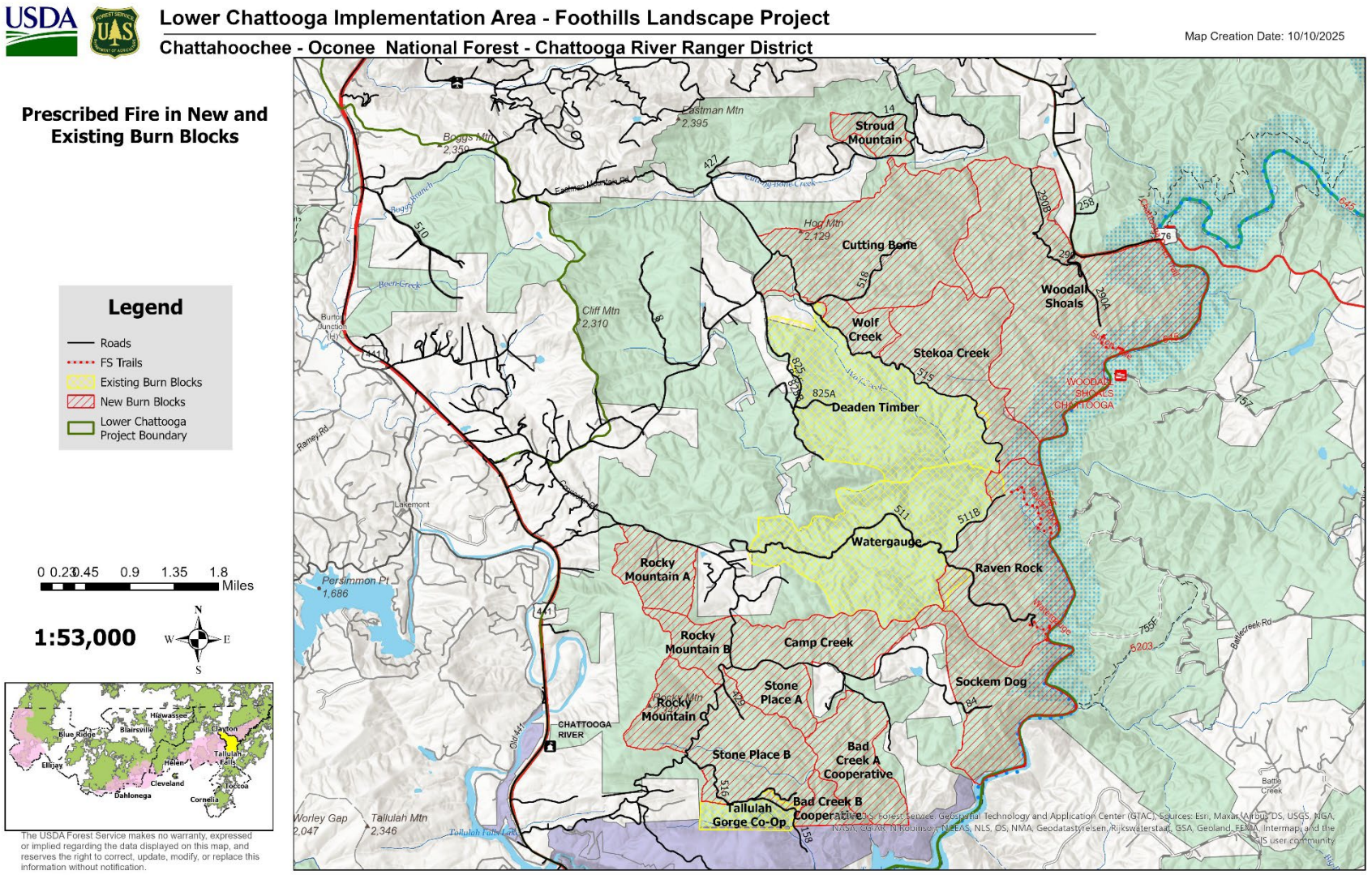
PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	Use fuel-break construction and/or mitigation methods that: (a) leave the root mat intact; (b) do not leave bare mineral soil exposed, and © do not create landforms that will drain directly into ephemeral streams for 25 feet on either side of ephemeral streams. Such methods include wet lines or use of existing constructed or natural barriers. If fuel-break construction results in breaking the root mat and thus exposure of bare mineral soil and connection to an ephemeral stream, restore the fire break for 25 feet on each side of the stream with re-shaping the soil surface and placing a soil cover in a timely manner to minimize erosion.	Forest Plan Standard FW-084
PDF 11: All heavy mechanical equipment use in parking lot activities	Operators should drive, operate, and store heavy equipment only within the proposed development footprint or the disturbed corridors of the surrounding roads and parking areas, so as to limit soil compaction and vegetation cover loss in the surrounding area. Additionally, bulldozer debris and excavated material from grading and digging operations should not be pushed into the surrounding natural forest areas. Construction should be designed and completed with no additional impacts to the riparian area.	FLP Specific
PDF 12: All heavy mechanical equipment uses	Soil rutting should be kept to a minimum.	Regional soil standard
	Compaction in an activity area should not exceed a 15% increase in bulk density in the upper 8 inches of the soil.	Regional soil standard
PDF 13: Mastication activities	The operator should try to move in a straight direction. Pivot turns should be kept to a minimum and turns should be conducted in a broad arc as the surrounding terrain and timber would allow in order to minimize soil disturbance. Care should be taken to avoid moving over the same piece of ground more than three times or use areas that have already been compacted through other activities.	FLP Specific
PDF 14: Temporary road construction	Temporary roads would follow the general contour as practical and would generally not exceed sustained grades over 10%.	GA BMP
	The travel way of temporary roads would generally not exceed 14-16 feet except at turnouts and landings.	GA BMP
	Drainage structures, such as outsloping and waterbars, would be installed along temporary roads when the use of the road is no longer needed.	GA BMP
	Temporary roads would be constructed on previous existing routes (old woods roads, skid trails, system trails) where possible to minimize the need for new temporary road construction.	FLP Specific
PDF 15: Timber harvest activities within the riparian corridor	Establish Streamside Management Zones (SMZ) on both sides of designated trout streams and tributaries according to the following options: Option A: For perennial trout streams and tributaries, a minimum 100-feet SMZ that includes a no-harvest zone within the first 25-feet of primary or secondary trout streams. Timber harvests within the remaining 75-feet of the SMZ should leave an average of 50 square ft of basal area per acre or at least 50% canopy cover. Option B: For perennial trout streams and tributaries within the 100-ft. SMZ, leave an average of 50 square feet of basal area per acre evenly distributed throughout the zone to provide shade. Option B may be selected if a qualified professional is consulted. Option C does not apply to CONF. The minimum CONF riparian corridor is 100 feet.	GA BMP

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
PDF 16: All activities within Riparian Corridor	Major actions that create long-term impacts are prohibited in the riparian corridor. Examples are roads or trails (excluding designated crossings), recreation sites and facilities, log landings, and permanent wildlife openings. Existing examples of the above are permitted if not causing environmental damage.	Forest Plan Standard 11-001
	Minor actions that create short-term impacts are permitted in the riparian corridor with appropriate mitigation and monitoring of impacts. Examples of minor actions include silvicultural activities needed to meet resource objectives for riparian-associated species, bank stabilization, temporary road construction and stream crossings associated with these activities.	Forest Plan Standard 11-002
	For all projects, additional protection, such as wider riparian corridor distances, higher residual canopy cover, restrictions on activities, etc. will be identified through site-specific inventories and surveys, site-specific biological evaluations, and site-specific mitigations identified in project NEPA documents.	Forest Plan Standard 11-003
	Silvicultural activities conducted within the riparian corridor will be conducted to meet or exceed compliance with the current edition of GA BMPs for Forestry	Forest Plan Standard 11-022
	Tree removals may only take place (in the riparian corridor) if needed to enhance the recovery of the, rehabilitate disturbances, provide habitat for T&E, RFSS, or riparian-associated species, reduce fuel buildup, provide for visitor safety, or for approved facility construction/renovation	Forest Plan Standard 11-024
PDF 17: Culvert and/or bridge maintenance, removal, or modification	Culverts and bridges (and any other man-made structure) would be surveyed for roosting bats before they are removed or modified, and if significant bat roosting is found, the structure would be maintained, or alternative roosts made available prior to removal or destruction	Forest Plan Standard FW-035
	Culverts that are barriers to stream biota passage in waters of aquatic Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species have priority for replacement over culverts in waters without Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species.	Forest Plan Standard FW-042
PDF 18: Timber sales	In salvage timber sales, all live den trees and an average of 5 of the largest suitable snags (snags with exfoliating bark) per acre will be retained. Snags in early stages of decay should be favored over older snags for retention. Snags should be clumped if possible.	Forest Plan Standard FW-090
	In even aged and two aged regeneration, retain all snags unless they are an immediate hazard. Sales will be designed to avoid snag removal if possible (skid trails, landings). Retain (or create) 5 snags per acre, near the forest edge if possible. In even-aged and two-aged regeneration stands larger than 10 acres, maintain a minimum of 15 sq. feet of basal area. These can be arranged in clumps, corridors, or feathered edges. In stands over 10 acres treated as seedtree or shelterwood, maintain a minimum of 20 sq. feet of basal area. Retain all trees within 20 feet of 5 snags per acre for windthrow protection and snag recruitment.	Forest Plan Standard FW-091
PDF 19: Activities around caves and/or mines	For caves and mines suitable of supporting cave-dependent species, a minimum buffer of 200 feet is maintained around portals. Prohibited activities within this buffer include use of wheeled or tractor vehicles (except on existing roads or for cave protection and maintenance), mechanical site prep, vegetation cutting, rec site construction, tractor-	Forest Plan Management Prescription 9.F-021

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	constructed firelines, herbicide application, and new road construction, skid trails, and log landings.	
PDF 20: All vegetation treatments that create young forest habitats (10,100 acres)	Within individual project areas to be implemented within the Foothills Landscape area, an assessment of existing acres of young forest habitats (stands less than 11 years old) would be made prior to implementation to determine the maximum amount of young forest that could be created. Such assessments would be tiered to the applicable Management Prescription allowances contained within each individual project IA. Young Forest habitats would not be created in excess of the maximum amounts allowed by each Management Prescription singly or combined.	FLP Specific (MRx compliance)
PDF 21: Any ground-disturbing activities	Botanical surveys would be completed in accordance with Forest risk assessments in suitable habitats for T&E and Sensitive species prior to any ground disturbing activities.	FLP Specific
	All activities should be evaluated for their potential to affect NNIS. A risk assessment (example in Appendix A of NNIS Report) should be utilized prior to implementation of any activity to determine the risks and consequences of the action on NNIS, and the necessary mitigations included as part of the activity.	FLP Specific

Attachment B: Additional Maps




USDA
Lower Chattooga Implementation Area - Foothills Landscape Project
Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forest - Chattooga River Ranger District
Map Creation Date: 10/10/2025
Prescribed Fire in New and Existing Burn Blocks
Legend
Roads
FS Trails
Existing Burn Blocks
New Burn Blocks
Lower Chattooga Project Boundary
0 0.23 0.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles
1:53,000
N
W
E
S
Stroud Mountain
Cutting Bone
Woodall Shoals
Wolf Creek
Stekoa Creek
Deaden Timber
Watergauge
Raven Rock
Rocky Mountain A
Rocky Mountain B
Rocky Mountain C
Camp Creek
Stone Place A
Stone Place B
Sockem Dog
Bad Creek A Cooperative
Bad Creek B Cooperative
Tallulah Gorge Co-Op
CHATTOOGA RIVER
Eastman Mtn 2,395
Boggs Mtn 2,350
Hog Mtn 2,129
Cliff Mtn 2,310
Persimmon Pt 1,686
Worley Gap 2,047
Tallulah Mtn 2,346
Hiawassee
Blairsville
Blue Ridge
Clayton
Ellijay
Helen
Tallulah Falls
Cleveland
Dahlonega
Toccoa
Cornelia
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U.S. Forest Service, Geospatial Technology and Application Center (GTAC), Sources: Esri, Maxar, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap, and the GIS user community

Attachment C: Monitoring Plan for Lower Chattooga Implementation Area

Resource Assessed	Monitoring Question/ Objective	Frequency	Field Method/ Data Collection	Documentation Format	Primary Responsibility
Soil Productivity & Water Quality	Are Best Management Practices (BMPs) being implemented through timber sale contract provisions, and according to Forest Plan standards?	During operational periods (timber sales, site prep, road construction and maintenance)	Evaluate implementation of BMPs and timber sale contract provisions. All timber sale units are evaluated for implementation.	Timber sale inspection forms, filed in timber sale contracts, reviewed by FSR	District Timber Sale Administrator, Harvest Inspector, Forest Service Representative (FSR)
Soil Productivity & Water Quality	Are the Best Management Practices and applicable Forest Plan standards effective in meeting soil productivity and water quality standards?	During operational periods and within one year after operations end	Field evaluation of the effectiveness of BMPs to meet Forest Plan standards. Random sample of harvest units using line transects & point samples	Field inspection forms, filed in S.O.	Interdisciplinary Team (Forest personnel in hydrology, soils, timber)
Best Management Practices Implementation – Audit by GFC	Were Best Management Practices implemented per Georgia's Forestry BMP Handbook and effective in protecting water quality?	During operational periods and within one year after operations end	Field evaluation of randomly selected harvest units and prescribed burns by Georgia Forestry Commission water quality personnel. This occurs across the state on federal land as well as state and private ownership.	Completion of GFC Best Management Practice Audit Form, filed in state database	Georgia Forestry Commission Water Quality personnel

Resource Assessed	Monitoring Question/ Objective	Frequency	Field Method/ Data Collection	Documentation Format	Primary Responsibility
Revegetation of Disturbed Areas	Were the prescribed revegetation efforts on disturbed sites such as skid trails, landings, and fire lines implemented and effective in establishing ground cover and erosion protection?	Within one growing season of revegetation operations	Visual evaluation of disturbed areas that have been revegetated to assess that sites have been seeded and rehabilitated to ensure revegetation is successful.	Field visual inspection of random sample of revegetated areas, documented on timber sale inspection reports	Timber Sale Administrator
Non-Native Invasive Plants	Are NNIS populations present within planned harvest/activity areas prior to treatment?	During project preparation/layout	Field inventory and mapping of NNIS populations	Inventoried populations will be mapped and treatment planned. Populations identified though risk assessment process prior to implementation may be added to Sale Area Map as required by Foothills NNIS Risk Assessment	District Silviculturist, District Timber Management Assistant (TMA), Presale Forester, District Wildlife Biologist
Non-Native Invasive Plants	Identify NNIS in treated areas as required by Foothills NNIS Risk Assessment and treat new infestations	Up to five field seasons after harvest activities have been completed as required by Foothills NNIS Risk Assessment	Field inspections to identify establishment or spread of NNIS as required by Foothills NNIS Risk Assessment	Inventoried populations will be mapped and treatment planned.	District Silviculturist, District TMA, District Wildlife Biologist
Rare Plants	Are rare plant protections adequate to protect populations?	During timber sale layout and operational periods	Field inspection of known rare plant populations.	Timber sale inspection reports	Timber Sale Administrator, District Wildlife Biologist
Timber	Are timber harvest activities adhering to applicable Forest Plan standards?	Throughout the life of the timber sale contract	Field inspections through all phases of harvesting to ensure contract provisions are being met and implemented in compliance with the Forest Plan.	Timber sale inspection reports	Harvest Inspector, Timber Sale Administrator, Forest Service Representative, District Wildlife Biologist, District Timber Management Assistant

Resource Assessed	Monitoring Question/ Objective	Frequency	Field Method/ Data Collection	Documentation Format	Primary Responsibility
Reforestation	Are harvested stands regenerated and restocked within five years of harvest?	One and three years after planting trees, and at 5 years or later after site preparation has been completed with natural regeneration	Field evaluation of sample plots and/or field inspection will be used to determine stocking, composition and condition of regeneration.	Report documented in FACTS database	District Silviculturist
Heritage	Are Forest Plan standards effective in protecting cultural and heritage resources?	During and immediately after harvest activities	Field inspections of sites to ensure the protection or avoidance of heritage resources.	Timber sale inspection reports	Timber Sale Administrator, Archeologist

Attachment D: Lower Chattooga Project Feedback/Response