



Jackson County Planning Department

To: Jackson County Manager- Don Adams

From: Planning Department Staff

Date: 8/10/2017

Re: Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Plan Revision

The Forest Service is revising the plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest. The Forest Plan is a general framework to guide forest management considering economic, social and environmental factors. The overarching goals for the plan are to:

- Enhance and restore resiliency,
- Provide clean and abundant water,
- Connect people to the land (recreation opportunities, cultural resources, lands, etc.),
- Opportunities to partner with others.

The Forest Service plan describes seven different geographic areas, but the Great Balsam and Highland Domes areas are found in Jackson County. The Great Balsam Geographic area includes much of north and central Jackson County as it borders the Qualla Boundary and includes Sylva, Cullowhee, Whittier and Dillsboro communities.

The overarching goals of the Forest Plan are similar to some of the goals identified in Jackson County's Land Use Plan. More specifically, Natural Resources Goal 1 of Jackson County's Land Use Plan is: "To preserve the habitat for identified endangered species". This goal is consistent with the Forest Service goal for the Great Balsam area: "Enhancing and restoring resiliency by a) conserving and improving high elevation red oak forests, northern hardwood forests, and spruce-fir forests." The forest service goal for the Great Balsam area to "Provide clean and abundant water by c) enhancing brook trout where habitat is suitable through restored aquatic organism passage and population augmentation" is consistent with Jackson County's Natural Resources Goal 3: "to encourage development that minimizes impervious surfaces", and Natural Resources Goal 5: "Limit commercial and industrial development along the Tuckasegee river and other trout waters." The Forest Service goal to "Connect people to the land (recreation opportunities, cultural resources, lands, etc.)" is consistent with Jackson County's Public Health Goal 2: "to promote physical activity within the County by promoting and encouraging the use of walking/hiking trails within the County" and Economic Development Goal 1: "To maintain a robust and sustainable tourism destination." Finally, the Forest Service goal: "to collaborate with others including consulting and partnering with Cherokee tribes to identify and preserve special tribal areas and natural resources" is consistent with Jackson County's Natural Resources Goal 2: "to create partnerships with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Western Carolina University, etc."

The Highland Domes geographic area includes much of southern Jackson County encompassing the Cashiers and Sapphire communities. Much of the Highland Domes area is known for the landscape of broad valleys, wild rivers, 300-foot cliffs and high granitic domes. Some familiar geographic features in the Highland Domes area are Yellow Mountain, Terrapin Mountain, Blackrock Mountain, Whiteside Mountain and Panthertown Valley.



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Some of the Forest Service goals for the Highland Domes area that are consistent with Jackson County's Land Use Plan goals are: "Providing clean and abundant water c) focusing resources to improve watershed conditions and function." This goal is consistent with Jackson County's Natural Resource Goal 3: "to encourage development that minimizes impervious surfaces and continue to administer the County's Watershed Protection Ordinance" and Land Use Goal 1: "Balance future growth with the protection of the natural environment." The Forest Service goal "to connect people to the land by d) consulting and partnering with Cherokee tribes to identify and ensure preservation and protection of special tribal areas and to develop interpretation as appropriate" is consistent with Jackson County's Cultural Resource goal 2: "to create partnerships with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and collaborate with them to identify and preserve historic and culturally significant properties."