



File Code: 1900

Date: January 26, 2015

Dear Interested Citizen,

We would like your comments on the draft environmental assessment for the Upper Warwoman Landscape Management Project on the Chattooga River Ranger District. The project is located in Rabun County, just east of the town of Clayton. The project proposes treatments on approximately 11,424 acres of National Forest System lands. The proposed action includes vegetation management treatments to create woodland habitat on 443 acres; intermediate thinning to maintain oak-pine forest on 569 acres; regeneration of oak-pine forest on 221 acres; controlled burning to restore pine-oak woodlands and creation of early successional habitat on 10,121 acres (6,008 acres of new rotational prescribed burning/4,113 acres of continued prescribed burning of existing units); mechanical creation of early successional habitat around wildlife openings on 70 acres; fisheries enhancement on 7.5 miles; 1 mile of road relocation to improve soil and water conditions; 11 miles of road reconstruction; 11 miles of road daylighting; 2 miles of road decommissioning and 8.2 miles of vehicular access restrictions (road gating). A modified proposed action was also developed to be responsive to public comments received during the scoping process. Details of the modified proposed action can be found at the below website.

The draft EA and associated documents are available at the project-specific link on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest website at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/UpperWarwomanProject>

Shift from Appeal Regulations to Objection Regulations

In our letter requesting scoping comments in early January 2013, we noted that persons who comment on the proposal would have administrative appeal rights as found at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 215. On March 27, 2013, those appeal regulations were replaced by objection regulations found at 36 CFR 218. Therefore this project, which implements the Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan and is not proposed under the authority of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, is now subject to the objection regulations found at 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B.

What this means is that persons must submit specific written comments during this 30-day comment period on the draft EA to be able to file an objection when the Forest Service releases a draft decision notice and final EA later in the year. At that time, persons who have provided specific written comments on the draft EA will have 45 days to review the final EA and the draft decision notice and, if they choose, may file an objection to the alternative that has been proposed for selection.



This current 30-day comment period on the draft EA represents the only opportunity for the public to provide specific written comments on the project and therefore have standing to object. Although comments submitted during the scoping period were considered in our analysis of the proposed action, which in turn led to development of the draft EA, these comments must be resubmitted to be considered in the objection process.

Persons who submit comments should include: (1) their name, address, and contact telephone number or email; (2) the name of the project on which they are submitting comments; and (3) specific written comments regarding the project, along with supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider when reaching a decision.

How You Can Comment

We would like your feedback. Please submit your comments to us within 30 days after the publication of the official legal notice in *The Northeast Georgian and Clayton Tribune*, which are the newspapers of record for the Chattooga River Ranger District. The publication date of the legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period, and will be based on whichever legal notice is published at the latest date. Please check the website above for the official legal notice and the publication date. Comments received in response to this solicitation will become part of the public record, and available for public review.

You may comment on the draft EA in a number of ways:

1. You may submit written comments to the responsible official, District Ranger Edward Hunter, at:

Chattooga River Ranger District

9975 Highway 441 South

Lakemont, GA 30552

2. You may fax your comments to: **(706)754-1021**.
3. You may hand deliver your comments between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, to the Chattooga River Ranger District office at **9975 Highway 441 South, Lakemont, GA 30552**.
4. You may provide oral comments at the Chattooga River Ranger District office during normal business hours via telephone at **(706) 754-6221** or in person.
5. Finally, you may send us your comments electronically. Please send them in a format such as an email message, rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc), to: comments-chattoogariver@fs.fed.us

For More Information

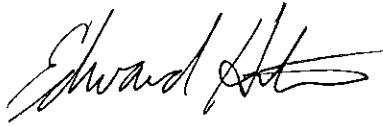
If you would like more information on the project, or if you would like to receive a hard copy of the draft EA, maps, or other documents, contact Mike Brod at (706)754-6221, or mbrod@fs.fed.us.

If you would like information about the objection process, contact Nelson González-Stillo at

(770)297-3051 or nelsongonzalezsullo@fs.fed.us.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "E" and "H".

EDWARD HUNTER
District Ranger