Foothills Landscape Project
Collaborative Group

DRAFT Agenda
October 5, 2023
Lumpkin County Community Center
365 Riley Road
Dahlonega, GA 30533
10am until 3pm

Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest Annual Meeting*

Old Business
- Earl's Ford Field Trip Discussion

New Business
- Collaborative Actions – Holly Creek

Working Group Session
- Discussion of Earl's Ford Implementable Actions

Reconvene the Whole
- Needs of Working Groups
- Earl's Ford Implementable Action
- Next Steps

Public Comment

Adjourn

*We will begin the day by participating in the Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest Annual Meeting. At the conclusion of that, we'll move to another room and begin the FCG formal meeting.

Foothills other activities occurring within the project area, but associated with other decisions

District	Implementation Area	Activity	Decision
CRD	Sumac-North Prong	Sumac III timber sale	Sumac EA
BRRD	Three Sister's	Three Sister's timber sale	Forest Health South EA
BRRD	Three Sister's	Road closure order FSR 135 and 135A	CE – in process
CRRD	Sarah's Creek	Metcalf creek culvert replacement	CE - completed
CRRD	Sarah's Creek	Earl's Ford dispersed rec improvements outside WSR corridor	CE – in process
CRRD	Soquee River	Piney Ridge	Eastside Forest Health EA
CRRD	Tallulah River	Shirley Grove	Eastside Forest Health EA

Foothills Landscape Project – Pre-Implementation Process Guide and Compliance Checklist

This document will be used by Forest Service (FS) employees to implement the Foothills Landscape Project by tiering projects to the Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Final Decision. Following the process outlined below will:

- Demonstrate regulatory compliance with all overarching law, policy and regulation.
- Aid in determining when/if additional analysis under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is warranted for any actions within a given Implementation Area (IA) of the Foothills Landscape.
- Ensure public engagement with stakeholders occurs throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- Provide planning consistency across FS units.
- Result in an Implementation Plan(s) that documents the locations and timing of management actions, applicable mitigations (project design features) and adheres to the Final Programmatic Decision Notice (DN). These implementation plans should provide adequate documentation required under NEPA for subsequent public scoping and if needed, tiered analyses and/or decisions.

Planning Steps:

Implementation Area: Holly Creek

Ranger District: Conasauga

Step 1: Forest Identifies all Management Opportunities within Implementation Area

Instructions: District Interdisciplinary Teams (IDTs) will consult the Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice and Forest Plan to identify potential project-level activities for the IA that are consistent with analysis and management direction.

A. IDTs will identify the desired conditions throughout the IA by reviewing applicable management prescription (MRx) objectives and standards per the Forest Plan and characterization of current conditions based on existing data sets (i.e., FSVEG spatial, etc.) Examples include, but may not be limited to:
   - ☐ What MRx are present? Suitable or unsuitable for timber production?
   - ☐ What sixth (6^{th}) level watersheds are present? Watershed condition class? Percent Total Impervious Area (TIA)?
   - ☐ Scenic Integrity Objectives?
   - ☐ Known road or access issues? Illegal off-road problems?
   - ☐ Impaired streams, known sediment, or Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) issues?
   - ☐ What vegetation treatment opportunities are present (GIS queries)?
   - ☐ What successional conditions are present? How many acres of young forest could be created?
   - ☐ Do some stands meet minimum old growth age? Does the IA need old growth small blocks?
   - ☐ Known recreation or trail issues/ concerns?

B. IDT will review proposed actions (EA – Table 17 & Appendix B) and select all appropriate management actions available and needed to achieve desired conditions within the IA, noting which are identified for implementation directly from programmatic DN versus those requiring further review.

Throughout the implementation planning process, if at any point the IDT discovers/ determines an action is needed or a condition exists that was not accounted for in the analysis, additional disclosure and NEPA would be triggered.

C. Summary of proposed actions covered in this Implementation Guide

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**	**Anticipated year(s) implementation would begin**
Replacement of culverts, fords, or bridges to increase aquatic organism passage (AOP) and function	Comp 757 – Milma Creek Comp 752 – two on Dill Creek Comp 751 –a tributary to Emery Creek	4 AOP projects		2024-2028

Step 2. Complete Initial Field Reviews and Validate Thresholds for Proposed Action

Instructions: Specialists should review the IA and complete their relevant checklist below. Information and documentation, if needed, should be included with this document. Once review is complete, and all specialists have signed, move to Step 3.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the FS resource specialists to ensure **a)** the applicable steps below are followed, **b)** findings are communicated to IDT/ Line Officer, and **c)** resulting information is carried through accordingly and documented in the draft Implementation Plan for the IA.

Some of the following procedures may be repeated as planning evolves or deferred until sufficient information becomes available and it is prudent.

Aquatics and Terrestrial Wildlife

☒Review existing data to determine known locations of Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species, designated critical habitats, Regional Forester's Sensitive Species, or locally rare species (i.e., consult Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spatial database (DNR-WCS) on AGOL, FS GIS shapefiles and other applicable records.). As part of the above process and specific to Terrestrial Wildlife, also:

- ☐ Consult with Georgia DNR for current range information for all federally listed bats to determine applicability of Forest Plan standards at: https://georgiawildlife.com/BatSurveyGuidance
- ☐ Review current spatial extent of suitable Indiana bat roosting/ maternity habitat in IA.
- ☐ Consult with Georgia DNR to verify current information about known roost trees or hibernacula for NLEB (northern long-eared bat) in IA.

☒ Obtain updated official species list from IPaC (Information for Planning and Consultation) for the project area at: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/. If new species are listed and present in IA and could be affected by the proposed action, consult with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)/ supplement NEPA accordingly.

List Date IPaC pulled: 8/18/2023

☒ Identify potential AOP opportunities (in conjunction with Forest Soil Scientist and Engineer).

- ***FLP Specific**: When increasing aquatic connectivity by removing barriers to aquatic organism passage, it should be noted that some barriers are beneficial in preventing encroachment of non-native species or movement of native species. The potential for negative consequences of removing a barrier should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

☒ Identify known issues that are contributing to decreased habitat quality (i.e., sediment sources, riparian function, increased water temperatures, etc.).

☒ Review existing data to determine presence or potential of priority wildlife species such as migratory songbirds, game species (i.e., consult DNR-WRD, Game Management, Region 8 bird records).

☐ Consider opportunity or need for wildlife habitat improvement, especially in conjunction with commercial vegetation treatments such as:

- Permanent openings acres in the project area. Consider creation or expansion (could create up to 1% of NFS acres per 6th level HUC).
- Opportunities for daylighting selected system roads.
- Opportunities for pollinator habitat improvement.

☐ The project design must comply with the following project design features:

- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 009****: Known black bear den sites will be protected from disturbance by a buffer of a minimum of 100 feet.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 010****: Potential bear den trees (greater than 20-inch diameter at breast height (dbh), hollow with broken tops) will be retained.*
- ***FLP Specific****: Within individual project areas to be implemented within the Foothills Landscape area, an assessment of existing acres of permanent openings would be completed prior to implementation to determine the maximum allowable acreage of new openings (up to 1% of the National Forest acreage in each 6th level watershed). Permanent openings would be managed as traditional grass/forb (food plots), shrub, native grass/forb, or pollinator habitat as appropriate for the site.*
- ***FLP Specific****: When feasible, native plants that support pollinators would be planted on the forest where appropriate i.e., including logging decks, wildlife openings, powerline, and road rights-of- way. This would specifically include planting milkweed for monarch butterflies. (Work with interested non-profits and organizations to determine the correct plants to consider and the proper locations to conserve and enhance the pollinator habitat across the landscape.)*

☒ If relevant, use space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in Implementation Plan (i.e., consideration of thresholds for annual reporting of activities affecting endangered bat habitat per Forest Plan standard FW-238, Large Woody Debris opportunities, roads w/in 300' of impaired streams present, etc.):

- The culverts would be inspected for use by roosting bats or birds prior to removal.

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are no changed conditions at the time of this review.

OR

☒ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

There are **changed conditions** for this resource since the decision was signed:

A new IPaC list for the Foothills Project Area was obtained on 08/18/2023; two additional wildlife species appear since the list was obtained in April 2021 for consideration in the project's Biological Assessment and NEPA analysis:

- Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is now a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered (12/15/20), but there are no requirements for consultation under Section 7 of the ESA for candidate species. There are voluntary conservation measures which could be undertaken; many of these are included in the Foothills Landscape Project's proposed action (avoiding milkweed during herbicide treatments, prescribed burning on a 3-5 year rotation, planting milkweed and native nectar-producing plants where possible, midstory control when thinning pine stands, creating or expanding permanent openings). The effects of the project on monarch butterfly were considered and disclosed in the Terrestrial Wildlife Report, Biological Evaluation, and summarized in the Environmental Assessment because the species is a Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS). This new information does not require any further review or NEPA analysis or consultation. This project **may impact individual monarch butterflies but is not likely to cause a loss of viability or a trend toward federal listing.** This is consistent with the findings in the Programmatic EA and Biological Evaluation.
- Frecklebelly madtom (*Noturus munitus)* is proposed for federal listing as Threatened (11/19/2020). This species was reviewed as a RFSS (Aquatic Resource Report) but was not considered for further analysis in the Biological Evaluation or EA because it does not occur in the project area or within 1 mile downstream. The Foothills Project would have **No Effect** on this species and this new information does not require any further review or NEPA analysis or consultation.

Bat species reclassified as endangered or proposed for listing as endangered:

- On March 23, 2022, the USFWS published a proposed rule to reclassify the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) from threatened to endangered; this is projected to be finalized by March 31, 2023. The effects of the FLP on NLEB were considered and disclosed in the Foothills Programmatic EA and Biological Assessment, but this change in status necessitates new consultation. In anticipation of this reclassification, Forest Service Regions 8 and 9 initiated formal consultation with the FWS regarding this species and ongoing projects and previously signed decisions including the Foothills Landscape Project. This formal consultation was completed on 3/31/23 resulting in a Biological Opinion (BO) and incidental take statement (ITS) covering the impacts of this and other projects. This project would comply with the BO. This project **May Affect, Is Likely to Adversely Affect** this species; however, there are no effects beyond those covered in the ongoing formal consultation process. The BO and ITS will ensure the continued compliance of the Foothills Landscape Project with section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act until the new *Bat Conservation Strategy for Four Species Affected by White-nose Syndrome on Eastern National Forests* (BCS) is finalized. This document includes conservation measures for tricolored bat, Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and little brown bat.

- On September 13, 2022, the USFWS proposed to list the tricolored bat as endangered. The effects of the FLP on tricolored bats were considered and disclosed in the Foothills Programmatic EA and Biological Evaluation because the species is on the Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS) list; it was determined that this project **may impact individuals but is not likely to affect viability or lead to federal listing of the species.** The proposed endangered listing triggers the need for *conference* with the USFWS or *consultation* once listing is finalized, therefore this project is currently in compliance with ESA regarding this species. It is expected that the listing will be finalized in late summer 2023 and that formal consultation to cover this and other existing projects regarding tricolored bat will be completed prior to final listing. Finally, the above referenced BCS is currently in draft form and will include protective measures for tricolored bat and three other species. This project will comply with that strategy and resulting BO and incidental take statement. The determination of effect would be that the project **May Affect, Is Likely to Adversely Affect** this species, but compliance with the anticipated BO and incidental take statement would satisfy the Forest Service's responsibilities under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act.

Considering these changed conditions or information and the existing analysis, this project **remains in compliance** with the Programmatic Environmental Assessment and the requirements set forth under NEPA, ESA, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Signature Ruth Stokes
Biologist

Botanical and Rare Communities (T&E and Sensitive*, NNIS)

☒ Review existing data to determine known locations of T&E species, designated critical habitats, Regional Forester's Sensitive species, or locally rare species (i.e., consult DNR – WCS spatial database on AGOL, FS GIS shapefiles and other records).

☒ Obtain updated official species list from IPaC for the project area at: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/. If new species are listed and present in IA and could be affected by the proposed action, consult with USFWS/ supplement NEPA accordingly.

List Date IPaC pulled: 8/18/2023

☐ Review existing data to determine known locations of rare communities (i.e., bogs, caves, rock outcrops).

☒ Review existing data to determine known locations of Non-native Invasive Species (NNIS); If needed, utilize risk assessment and conduct botanical surveys and NNIS assessment to determine if individuals or populations occur once activity locations are known.

☒ Communicate known site locations to IDT for avoidance (i.e., protected information for internal planning purposes only).

☒ The project design must comply with the following project design features:

- ***FLP Specific**: Known populations of T&E, Sensitive and LR plants would be protected by placement of a buffer zone around them where possible. The appropriate measures would be determined in coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources.*

☐ If relevant, use space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in the Implementation Plan (i.e. additional opportunities for unique habitat work):

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are no changed conditions at the time of this review.

OR

☒ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

There are **changed conditions** for this resource since the decision was signed:

The new IPaC list for the Foothills Project Area was obtained on 08/18/2023; one additional species was added since the list was obtained in April 2021 for consideration in the project's Biological Assessment and NEPA analysis:

Tennessee yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris tennesseensis*) is federally-listed as endangered. It is a wetland plant with no known occurrences in the Foothills Landscape Project area. We have reached out to Georgia DNR botanist Carlee Steppe for information about why the species was added to the IPaC list for this project. She confirmed that there are no new occurrences of the species in the project area. The most likely explanation for the listing on IPaC is that there is a new occurrence outside the project area but in one of the 8 counties encompassing the Foothills Project boundary. This project would have **no effect** on Tennessee yellow-eyed grass or any wetland habitats.

Considering these changed conditions or information and the existing analysis, this project **remains in compliance** with the Programmatic Environmental Assessment and the requirements set forth under NEPA, ESA, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Signature Ruth Stokes
Biologist

Cultural Resources

☒ Archaeologist gathers relevant cultural resources data for IA, determines maximum survey needed, and notifies tribes and Georgia State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) of proposed undertakings and cultural resources work. Tribes/SHPO have 45 days to review.

☐ Archaeologist gathers relevant cultural resources and plant species data and provide to tribes for 60-day sacred site review. **Once consultation completed, begin surveys and required mitigations.**

☒ Communicate known site locations to IDT for avoidance (i.e., protected information for internal planning purposes only).

☒ The project design must comply with the following project design features:

- ***FLP Specific****: Cultural Resources sites with an eligible or undetermined National Register of Historic Places status will be avoided and protected from project effects. The standard avoidance method will consist of a 100-foot protective buffer around each site, or as determined through consultation with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer and interested Tribes.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 208****: Manage heritage resources in accordance with applicable federal laws, regulations, policy, agreements, and in the public interest. Emphasize the protection of significant heritage properties, completion of the forest wide inventory, and assessment of the significance of inventoried properties. Identify opportunities for appropriate use and interpretation of heritage properties.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 211:*** *Consult with Heritage specialists in the planning stages of projects involving ground disturbance, diminished jurisdiction, or increased public use of, or access to, an area.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 212****: Responsible official will halt any project during ground disturbance activities if known or newly discovered heritage resources are encountered, regardless of whether the area has been previously disturbed, until the significance of the site has been determined by Forest heritage staff through coordination with consulting parties.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 214****: Pursuant to 36 CFR 196.18, site locations are exempt from provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Do not disclose site locations in documents available to the public, including heritage GIS data, unless agreed to by all parties, including Native American tribes as appropriate.*
- ***FLP Specific****: All actions associated with the Foothills Landscape Project will follow the stipulations of the Foothills Programmatic Agreement.*

☐ If relevant, use space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in the Implementation Plan:

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

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OR

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

Signature Michael Stenland
Archaeologist

Fire and Fuels

☐ Identify the existing fire condition class (FCC) and opportunities/ needs for treatment (EA Appendix F: Table 45).

☐ Identify any existing hazardous fuels and opportunities for treatment in WUI based on risk (EA Appendix F: Table 44).

☐ Identify existing Rx burn unit(s) present in the IA.

☐ Identify if new burn units need to be established. Consider the implementation needs for that new burn unit. For example, but not limited to:

- Are natural barriers present?
- Is dozer line needed? If so, resource concerns?
- Other?

☒ If relevant, use space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in the Implementation Plan:

There are no prescribed burn units present in the vicinity of the AOP locations.

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

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OR

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed

conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature Jeff Schardt
Fire Management Officer

Soils and Hydrology

☒ Check with Forest Soil Scientist/ Hydrologist to determine existing and projected Total Impervious Area (TIA) in each 6th level HUC (EA Table 48, Appendix F).

- **FLP Specific Project Design Feature**: *Watershed TIA should not exceed 10%. Impervious surfaces are those that prohibit the movement of water from the land surface into the underlying soil (ex. Roads, trails, and other compacted areas).*

☒ Identify current Watershed Condition Class and identify any Priority Watersheds (See Tables 6 and 7 in EA). If Priority Watersheds exist, work with Forest Soil Scientist and/or Hydrologist on Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP).

☒ Identify Streamside Management Zones (SMZs), proper widths, and any prescriptions within the SMZ.

☒ Coordinate with Forest Soil Scientist to ensure past detrimental disturbance in combination with proposed treatment disturbance would not exceed 15% of the activity area. If 15% would be exceeded by the treatment, evaluate the area for soil restoration activities.

☒ Coordinate with Forest Soil Scientist to identify any sensitive soil types (see various hazards and ratings in soil report) and slopes greater than 35%.

☒ The project design must comply with the following project design features:

- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 065****: On all soils dedicated to maintaining forest cover, the organic layers, topsoil, and root mat will be left intact over at least 80% of an activity area.*

- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 06****: Water control structures necessary for the control of surface water movement resulting from soil disturbing activities will be constructed within 30 days of completion of the activity.*

☐ If relevant, use space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in Implementation Plan:

These activities occur within the Emery Creek-Holly Creek watershed, which was identified as a priority watershed in 2022. This watershed obtained a rating of "functioning" during the 2010 evaluation and that is what is reflected in the Foothills EA. The most current rating (2021) of the watershed indicates the watershed has a rating of "functioning at risk". These activities are listed in the Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) as essential projects. Activities listed will not add to impervious area within any watersheds listed.

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

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OR

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature Taylor Hughes, Forest Soil Scientist
Soil/Hydrology Specialist

Recreation and Transportation/ Road System

☒ Identify impacts to developed recreation, designated dispersed recreation, and trails from non-recreation actions.

☒ Identify road maintenance/ improvements needed to implement proposed activities

☒ Verify data in INFRA and correct any discrepancies.

☒ Identify any roads from the EA with ML changes identified for maintenance level reduction or decommissioning.

☒ Identify opportunities to improve the condition of NFS roads. Coordinate with Silviculture, Soils and Engineering.

☒ The project design must comply with the following project design features:

- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 129****: During active projects, all roads, ditches, and other improvements in the project area are kept free of logs, slash, and debris. Any road, ditch, or other improvement damaged by operations is promptly repaired.*

☒ Identify the impacts to the recreation user (user experience, access, public health and safety) from both the recreation-specific actions and non-recreation actions and determine appropriate methods of notification and communication. For example, but not limited to:

- ☐ Are there any potential road closures that may impact access to recreation sites? Seasonal or temporary closures?
- ☐ Prescribed burning or vegetation management that may cause closures?
- ☐ Smoke or equipment that may conflict with users?
- ☐ Other?

☒ Identify Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) and Recreation Opportunity Spectrums (ROS) for the IA and communicate with Silviculture, Soils and Engineering any concerns of not adhering to these management directions.

- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 097:*** *The Forest SIO Maps and Tables in each prescription govern all new projects, including special uses. Assigned SIOs are consistent with ROS management direction. Existing conditions may not currently meet the assigned SIO.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 114:*** *Maintain consistency between adopted SIOs and ROS management direction (Standard FW-102, 2-29), including promptly rehabilitating firelines to appear natural in areas of High and Very High SIO.*

☐ Wild and Scenic River designation exists in the implementation area

☐ Confirm presence of designated National Scenic, Historic or Recreation Trails. If present, coordinate appropriately.

☐ If relevant, use the space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in Implementation Plan (i.e., other Recreation actions (including Categorical Exclusion level actions) occurring in the IA, anticipated public notices/ closure order needs specify):

The Holly Creek AOP proposal will have no negative impacts to Forest Roads or trails outside of the construction phase. Three of the proposed AOP projects are on the Milma Creek ATV trail. There will be visitor impacts during the construction phase of each AOP because the trail will be closed temporarily during this time. One proposed AOP site is on Forest Road Upper Emery Creek (78E), this road is a gated OML2 road with no public traffic.

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

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OR

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

Signature *Kevin Vasalinda*
Civil Engineering Technician

Vegetation

☐Review/ collect stand exam data in accordance with current policy (forest health, species composition, stand age, basal area, etc.).

☐Determine existing acres of young forest habitat (0-10 years old) in the IA using aerial imagery, remote sensing data, and/or ground truthing.

☐Work through Foothills decision matrixes for stands being considered for silvicultural treatment.

☐Confirm stands are not identified for proposed old growth or forest plan designated Table 17 in EA.

☐Do hemlock treatments exist, and if so, are any in Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)?

☐Review operational feasibility and access. This includes, but not limited to:

- ☐ Management Prescriptions
- ☐ Identify potential roads needed based on proposed action. Coordinate with Engineering on any needed improvements (culvert replacements, road widening, etc.)
- ☐ Temporary road construction anticipated. Coordinate with Soils, Engineering, Timber Sale Administrator, and other applicable resource areas
- ☐ Slopes

☐ Determine connected actions (prescribed fire, herbicides, etc.). See EA, Table 17 and Appendix B for full list.

☐ The project design must comply with the following project design features:

- ***FLP Specific**: Forested areas greater than 1/2 mile from a road should be excluded from commercial timber harvest.*

☒ If relevant, use space below to list additional survey needs or pertinent information to include in Implementation Plan:

No proposed silviculture treatments as part of this action. Check boxes 1-7 are not applicable to the proposed activities.

☐ Maps and visual aids have been attached. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identifcation of issues and concerns.

Please select one of the statements below:

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OR

☐ All activities shown in the draft plan have been reviewed for compliance with the Foothills Landscape EA or other relevant NEPA compliance and my resource. There are changed conditions or specific actions that are not in compliance. These conditions or actions are listed below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature William Hunter
Silviculturist

IDT Leader or District Ranger

☐ Communicate IA location to Forest Land Surveyor early so that Boundary Management policies are followed, and concerns are either addressed and/or mitigated.

☒ Verify that all resource specific maps or visual aids have been completed.

☒ NEPA for any changed conditions or activities not covered in the Foothills Landscape EA or other existing analysis has been initiated. Please review each specialist section above to identify the specific conditions or actions not covered.

☒ Besides the resource specific PDFs listed above, the project design must also comply with the following project design features:

- ***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.*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 031:*** *As part of recurrent monitoring and any project inventories, include data collection on existing or potential threats such nonnative invasive species*
- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 032****: Nonnative invasive species shall be controlled with priority given to areas where they are causing adverse effects to federally listed species, or to individuals of other species needed to maintain their population viability on the national*

forest. Nonnative invasive species are not intentionally introduced near these species or individuals, nor will management actions facilitate their inadvertent introduction.

- ***Forest Plan Standard FW- 056****: When seeding disturbed soils, use only native or non-persistent non-native species per Region policy.*

☐ If relevant, use space below to list additional needs or pertinent information to include in Implementation Plan:

Signature

District Ranger

Step 3: Draft Implementation Plan and Initiate Surveys

Instructions: District IDTs review data from initial field visits, surveys and inventories. The IDT works together to consider all information captured in Steps 1-2 above, identifies applicable project design features and recommend management actions needed for IA to the local Line Officer. The resulting information will be presented as a draft implementation plan (see end of this document) used to communicate the project-specific proposals for each IA to stakeholders and identify locations of remaining survey work/ data needs.

The following checklist provides guidance in completing the implementation plan attached to this document. This plan provides the baseline information necessary to comply with the overarching law, policy, and regulation while ensuring consistency with the final EA and DN. Each resource specialist is responsible for ensuring the information presented in this implementation plan is accurate and complete.

☒ All activities within the IA are fully listed and described. Please provide sheets for each project and summarize on the first page.

☒ Ensure all relevant resource maps are attched to Implementation Plan. Level of detail should be sufficient to allow for adequate planning and identification of issues and concerns.

☒ Ensure PDFs for each resource area (Step 2) have been included in the Draft Implementation Plan.

☒ Ensure that all activities (or specific conditions or activity components) that need additional analysis are clearly articulated in the Draft Implementation Plan.

☐ Determine any outstanding needs or missing data and add to the Implementation Plan.

- ☐ Conduct site-specific inventories for botanical species based on forest risk assessment direction
- ☐ Conduct site-specific inventories for NNIS species
- ☐ Conduct other biological inventories as needed
- ☐ Complete NNIS risk assessment to determine needed mitigations
- ☐ Conduct site-specific inventories for cultural resources
- ☐ Other

Use space below to provide additional information such as process for obtaining or detailed description of outstanding needs:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 4: Present Draft Implementation Plan to Stakeholders (Foothills Collaborative Group)

Forest intends to engage the Foothills Collaborative Group (FCG) early and often throughout the life of the project to identify issues, concerns, and desires of its members. The FCG is *(will be)* a diverse, self-governing body of representatives from various interest groups and organizations who wish to assist the Forest in successful implementation of the FLP in accordance with the Final Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice.

The FCG would have opportunity to provide feedback and make recommendations on draft implementation plans prior to public notice. Utilizing collaborative input in this way allows for robust stakeholder influence throughout the life of the project. Ideally, having the FCG influence and refine draft implementation plans prior to public release will result in less controversial, more socially acceptable projects and help the agency accomplish its objectives with greater efficiency.

Summary of Comments Received:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Summary of how comments were incorporated into Implementation Plan:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 5: Public Notice and Opportunity for Input

Instructions: The Forest will hold an annual meeting (anticipated late summer/ early fall) to provide public assessment of the draft implementation plan(s), refined maps, and schedule. If planned activities are demonstrated to fall within the scope and scale of the final EA/DN, feedback received during the annual meeting will be considered by implementation teams and responsible official and used to further collaborative efforts and adjust implementation activities as appropriate. If subsequent analysis is needed due to new or changed conditions in the IA that were not accounted for in the programmatic EA/ DN, the Forest will also seek official comment in accordance with NEPA. Outyear plans may also be presented at this time with opportunity for public engagement, though in less detail.

Summary of Comments Received:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Summary of how comments were incorporated into Implementation Plan:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 6: Conduct Field Trip(s)/Educational Outreach

Instructions: Hold a public field trip of Choose an item. IA. The Forest anticipates at least one field trip per year, depending on public interest. These field reviews will focus on pre-implementation priorities/concerns identified from Steps 2-4; however post-treatment and monitoring activities may be viewed on the same trip if desired and feasible. The FCG should help identify priorities or potential areas of concern, and subject matter experts for furthering education opportunities.

Summary of field trip details and comments received:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Summary of how comments were incorporated into Implementation Plan:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 7: Identify Additional Monitoring Needs

Instructions: Identify specific monitoring that may be needed. Those already listed in the Forest Plan are considered mandatory. Additional monitoring recommendations provided from the FCG will be considered. Any additional monitoring is at the discretion of the line officer.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 8: Finalize Implementation Plan

Instructions: The IDT will finalize the implementation plan. Update the draft plan created in Step 4 with information and revisions that resulted from public involvement and survey results. Ensure all aspects of this checklist have been completed, including signatures, before submitting for approval by the line officer (District Ranger). Ensure contracts, agreements, burn plans, or other implementation instruments are reflective of this framework. Ensure proprietary information is protected (cultural and T&E).

- ☐ Update final project acres and miles in Implementation Plan
- ☐ For each resource area, update final acres and ensure information is complete
- ☐ Finalize Silviculture prescriptions and marking guides
- ☐ Finalize prescribed burn plans
- ☐ Confirm all relevant PDFs are included
- ☐ Confirm all maps are attached
- ☐ Any additional analysis, if required, is completed and documentation is attached

Step 9: Submit for District Ranger Approval

Instructions: Submit the completed implementation plan to the District Ranger for review and approval.

I have ensured my district and SO specialists followed this guide as intended, and the resulting implementation plan and selected design features have been designed accordingly and in compliance with the final DN for the FLP. Additional information, if relevant to this review, has been documented below:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature _____

District Ranger

Step 10: Conduct Contract Review (if applicable)

The Timber Contracting Officer will review the contract package to ensure the applicable design features included in final implementation plan are identified within various contract C provisions.

Signature _____

Contracting Officer

Foothills Landscape Project Implementation Plan

Implementation Area: Hollly Creek
Ranger District: Conasauga
Date: August 18, 2023

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

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.
☐	Canebrake restoration actions including overstory removal (may include commercial treatment)	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.
☐	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.

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.
☐	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.
☐	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.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Implement changes to system road ML and/or use restrictions	Reduce ML in system roads, including seasonal closure in some roads update MVUM	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	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.

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.
☐	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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	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.
☐	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.
☐	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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest	Commercial thinning	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Maintenance of southern yellow pine forest	Expanding gap treatment	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Maintenance of oak forest	Commercial thinning	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Maintenance of oak forest	Expanding gap treatment	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Commercial and non-commercial thinning of pine plantations to improve forest health	Commercial thinning	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) 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.

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.
☐	Create young forest (ESH) by daylighting roads and permanent openings	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.
☐	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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
☐	Maintenance of oak forest	Crown-touching release with manual methods	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.
☐	Commercial and non-commercial thinning of pine plantations to improve forest health	Non-commercial thinning	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	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	Comp 757 – Milma Creek Comp 752 – two on Dill Creek Comp 751 – a tributary to Emery Creek	4 AOP projects	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	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	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.

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 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?
Click or tap here to enter text.	☐yes ☐no
Click or tap here to enter text.	☐yes ☐no
Click or tap here to enter text.	☐yes ☐no
Click or tap here to enter text.	☐yes ☐no

Activity Name: Replacement of culverts, fords, or bridges to increase aquatic organism passage and function

Existing Condition (Need): Culvert assessments were completed on multiple culverts in the Holly Creek watershed during 2022. There are 4 culverts that complete barriers to aquatic organism passage (AOP). Emery Creek (1), Milma Branch (1), Dill Creek (2) are Holly Creek tributaries with important endemic fish fauna. Several of the culverts are in poor condition.

Desired Condition: Increase aquatic connectivity in cold and warm water streams (Forest Plan Objective 26.3) by decreased number of barriers to AOP.

Known Conditions that Trigger Restoration Actions: High priority culvert locations with AOP barriers.

How to Implement Change: The replacement of culverts which are barriers to aquatic organism passage (AOP) with appropriate structures (bottomless culverts, bridges, or low-water fords) in conjunction with other treatments, i.e., stream habitat and road improvement projects is proposed on up to 5 locations. These projects require extensive and expensive engineering design and construction costs, therefore they would be repaired as funding permits on a priority basis.

☒ **Map(s) Attached**

Watershed(s) (6th-level HUC) where activity is planned: All the culverts are in the Emery Creek-Holly Creek watershed HUC 12 #031501010401. This is a Priority Watershed.

AOP candidate on Milma Branch. This culvert is a complete barrier to aquatic organism passage.

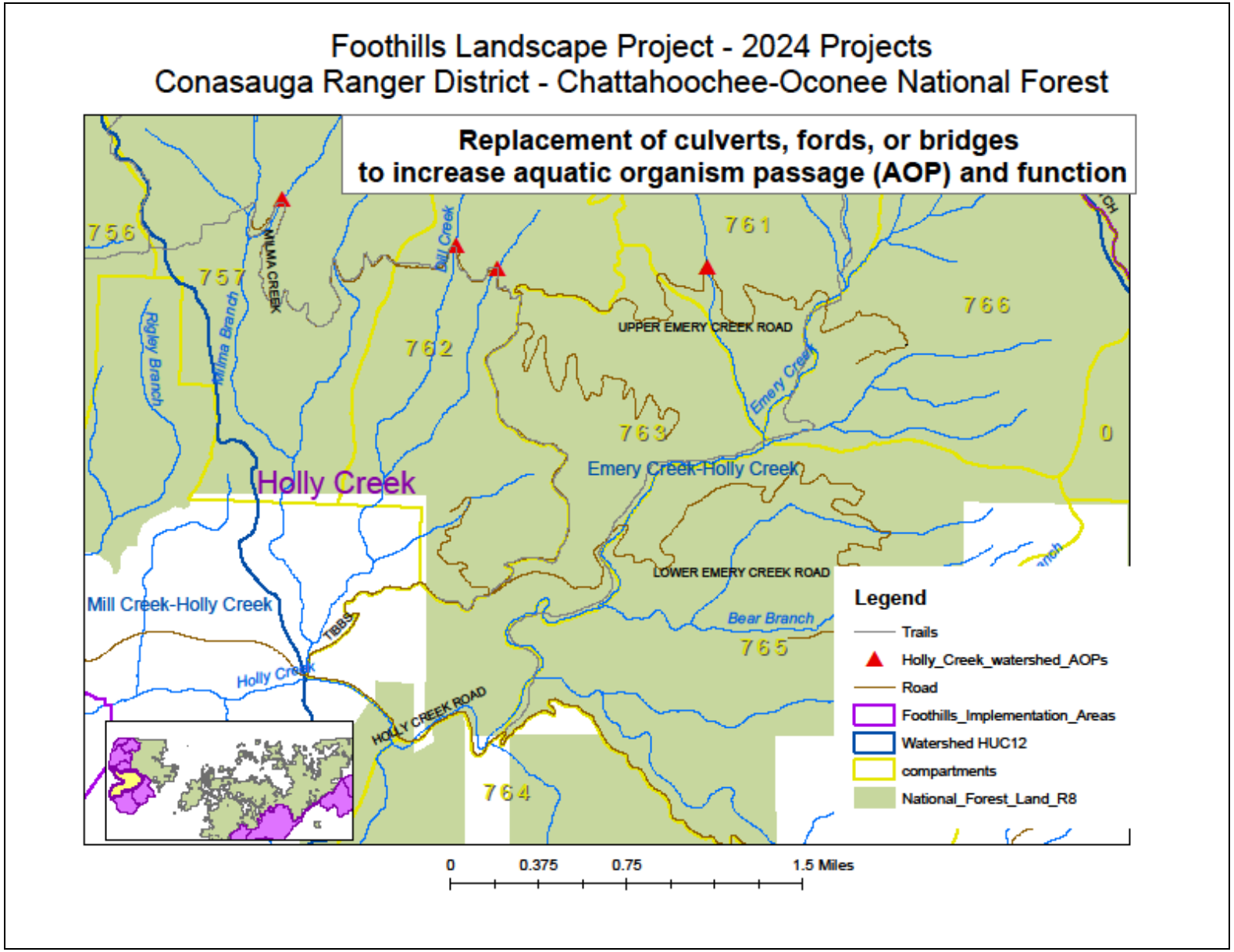
MRx(s) where activity would occur: The culverts on are in MRx 9.H Management, Maintenance and Restoration of Plant Associations.

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.*

PDF 17


Foothills Landscape Project - 2024 Projects
Conasauga Ranger District - Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest
Replacement of culverts, fords, or bridges
to increase aquatic organism passage (AOP) and function
756
757
761
762
763
766
0
764
765
MILMA CREEK
Bull Creek
Ridley Branch
Milma Branch
Emery Creek
UPPER EMERY CREEK ROAD
LOWER EMERY CREEK ROAD
HOLLY CREEK ROAD
TIBBS
Bear Branch
Holly Creek
Holly Creek
Emery Creek-Holly Creek
Mill Creek-Holly Creek
Legend
Trails
Holly_Creek_watershed_AOPs
Road
Foothills_Implementation_Areas
Watershed HUC12
compartments
National_Forest_Land_R8
0
0.375
0.75
1.5 Miles

Attachment A: Additional 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)
	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)

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	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 recommendations.	FLP Specific
	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

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	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-treated systematically within timber sale areas in order to prevent the spread of NNIS into new areas.	FLP Specific
	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

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	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 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.	Forest Service Manual 5100 Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 5140 Hazardous Fuel 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	GA BMP

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	cover as soon as possible to reduce erosion and sedimentation.	
	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
	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	Soil rutting should be kept to a minimum.	Regional soil standard

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
equipment uses	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 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	Forest Plan Standard 11-024

PDF Number: Location or Condition	Project Design Features, Best Management Practices, and Standards	Origin
	construction/renovation	
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-constructed firelines, herbicide application, and new road construction, skid trails, and log landings.	Forest Plan Management Prescription 9.F-021
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

Attachment B: Monitoring Plan

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, skid trails, 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

Resource Assessed	Monitoring Question/Objective	Frequency	Field Method/Data Collection	Documentation Format	Primary Responsibility
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
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