

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/21/2022 4:00:00 AM

First name: David

Last name: Whitmire

Organization: Fish and Wildlife Conservation Council

Title:

Comments: By Fax 828-257-4863- Objection Coordinator

James Melonas, Forest Supervisor

160 Zillicoa St.

Suite A

Asheville, NC 28801

Re: Objection to Nantahala / Pisgah National Forest Plan

Dear Supervisor Melonas,

On behalf of our Leadership team and Council we want to express our gratitude for the opportunity to work with you and your staff over the past nine years building the Nantahala / Pisgah National Forest Plan. Although we may not agree with all aspects of this plan, we see many of our contributions included. We also have faith and trust in the Forest Service that this plan was developed to achieve the goals and desired conditions for Wildlife and Fisheries habitat that is entrusted in your care. With that said and after careful review we have one concern we feel must be addressed to ensure habitat work and the footprint needed to achieve those goals and objectives can be secured and operational.

Issue. Ephemeral streams should be limited in protection in the Forest Plan. NC Forestry BMPs adequately protect water quality and the BMPs do not require managers to change practices in ephemeral drainages. Any overreaching restrictions on ephemeral streams would make forest management in the mountains prohibitive.

a, Requested relief: Limit ephemeral stream channels in Desired Conditions, Objectives, Standards, or Guidelines in the Forest Plan to a 25ft buffer extending past the SMZ of perennial and intermittent bodies of water. From the upstream side of 25ft ephemeral buffer, NC Forestry BMP'S would adequately protect the resource. This would include changing language in the WTR-DC-O6 to represent this concern and need.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to your chosen Alternative. It is obvious to our council that decisions made were a result of careful analysis of a diverse collaborative process. That the Alternative chosen represents what the Forest Service sees as its path forward to achieve its goals and desired conditions. Although we feel models and other data may not be perfect in given us details, that trust, and flexibility is necessary to adapt if change is needed. We look forward to working with the Forest Service for wildlife and its habitat on North Carolina's Forest at the highest levels possible to achieve those goals and desires this plan lays out.

Sincerely,

David Whitmire

FWCC Chairman