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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Susan Miller, District Ranger

Uwharrie National Forest

Troy NC 27371

Dear Ms. Miller,

I appreciate the need for the USFS to improve safety and address erosion on some of the roads through the Badin Recreation Area. That said, I think it is vital for the USFS to do so in a way that avoids any negative impact on important natural resources.

This includes threatened and endangered native plants like the populations of Carolina thistle and Georgia aster that have been documented along the roads, but also the many other species of native plants in this important natural area, including those associated with Piedmont Prairie remnants that occur along these roads.

Any paving or widening needs to be as limited and restrained as possible. The goal is to improve safety, not to facilitate heavier use and excessive speed. A wide, straight, paved road could very well undermine the goal of improved safety.

To prioritize safety, I would urge the USFS to also include elements such as speed bumps. There are designs that can accommodate emergency vehicles such as fire trucks but still control the average speed of passenger vehicles.

Trail crossings are particularly important areas for traffic calming devices. The USFS needs to also prioritize the safety of hikers, horseback riders, and other users who cross these roads.

Along these lines, I believe it is unwise to turn over control of these roads to the NC DOT.

For example, what if NC DOT decides at some point in the future that a four-lane highway through the Badin Recreation Area is the most expeditious way to move increasing amounts of traffic?

NC DOT is very good at moving vehicles, but I believe its mission is completely at odds with the mission of the USFS, which is to "sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."

Please use your own mission statement as your guiding light in moving forward with any plans to make changes to the roads through the Badin Recreation Area.

Many thanks for all you do.

Ruth Ann Grissom