

# USFS Updates from the Pisgah National Forest

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**Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan Update -  
Release of Final Plan**

**Tropical Storm Fred Impacts**

**Pisgah Restoration Initiative (PRI)**

**U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree**





# Nantahala and Pisgah Forest Plan Revision – Final Plan

## Theme: Connecting People to the Land

- » Emphasizes forest places and uses by identifying 12 **geographic areas** and a new management area (**Interface**) that recognizes access and concentrated recreation use, including National Recreation Trails.
- » Establishes a framework for **sustainable recreation**, including standards for **new trail construction** built on modern design and collaboration.
- » Calls for developing trail **loop opportunities**, a strategy for **climbing** opportunities, an operations and maintenance guide for dispersed **campsites**, and more.
- » Supports **economic development** and **tourism** in local communities, the **forest product industry** and **nontimber forest product**, collection, maintains the forests' **scenic integrity**, **access**, and sustains our **cultural and historic resources**.
- » Honors and redeems our **trust responsibility to tribes**, recognizing tribes and tribal members as partners in managing the national forests, and valuing **traditional ecological knowledge** and places of tribal significance.



## Theme: Sustaining Healthy Ecosystems

- » Establishes a clear vision for each ecological community on the forest.
- » Accelerates the development of currently underrepresented habitats:
  - Young Forest
  - Open Forest
  - Old Growth
- » Increases **prescribed fire** up to 20,000 annual acres and up to 45,000 annual acres with additional resources.
- » Restores and maintains **rare habitats**, including wetlands and Southern Appalachian bogs, Carolina hemlock bluffs, balds, spruce fir, and more.
- » Provides **overall habitat diversity** of all wildlife, including habitats to support recovery of federally threatened and endangered species.
- » Increases **nonnative invasive species treatments**, habitat restoration and **watershed** projects.



## Theme: Providing Clean and Abundant Water

- » Identifies **priority watersheds** for watershed restoration activities during the next 20 years, spread across the forest.
- » Emphasizes **aquatic organism passage, stream channel improvement** projects, maintaining and expanding the range of **brook trout, freshwater mussels and other aquatic species**.
- » Establishes **streamside zones** where activities contribute to improving the larger stream ecosystem.
- » Includes an objective to develop a forestwide **road maintenance** plan to promote public safety, prevent erosion, and protect water quality while maintaining access.
- » Provides the flexibility to **adapt** to changing conditions in the face of **climate change**.



## Theme: Partnering with Others

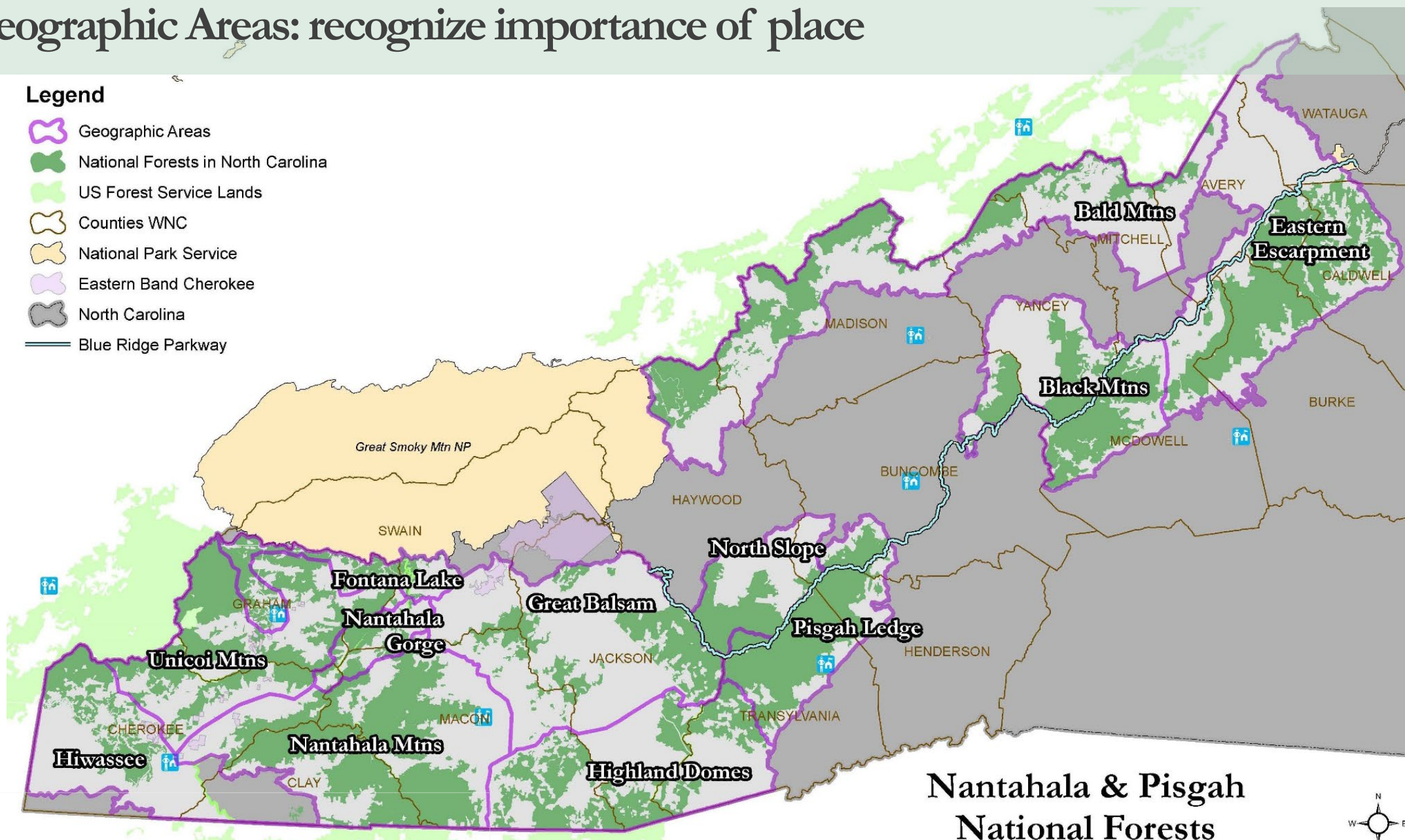
- » Builds on **thousands of ideas** that citizens, organizations, and governments shared during plan development.
- » Ensures that **all interests** benefit from the implementation of our **multiple use mission**.
- » Identifies **stretch goals** for nearly all objectives if additional capacity in the form of resources or help from others is available during plan implementation; and **identifies ways to work with others** to accomplish shared goals.
- » Positions the forest to become a **partner** of choice for **volunteers** and local communities as well as local and national organizations.
- » Ensures **all are welcome** to the national forest, positioning the forest to expand the diversity of **visitors, volunteers, and partners**, and increase public land **employment pathways** across all demographics.



# Geographic Areas: recognize importance of place

## Legend

- Geographic Areas
- National Forests in North Carolina
- US Forest Service Lands
- Counties WNC
- National Park Service
- Eastern Band Cherokee
- North Carolina
- Blue Ridge Parkway



Nantahala & Pisgah  
National Forests

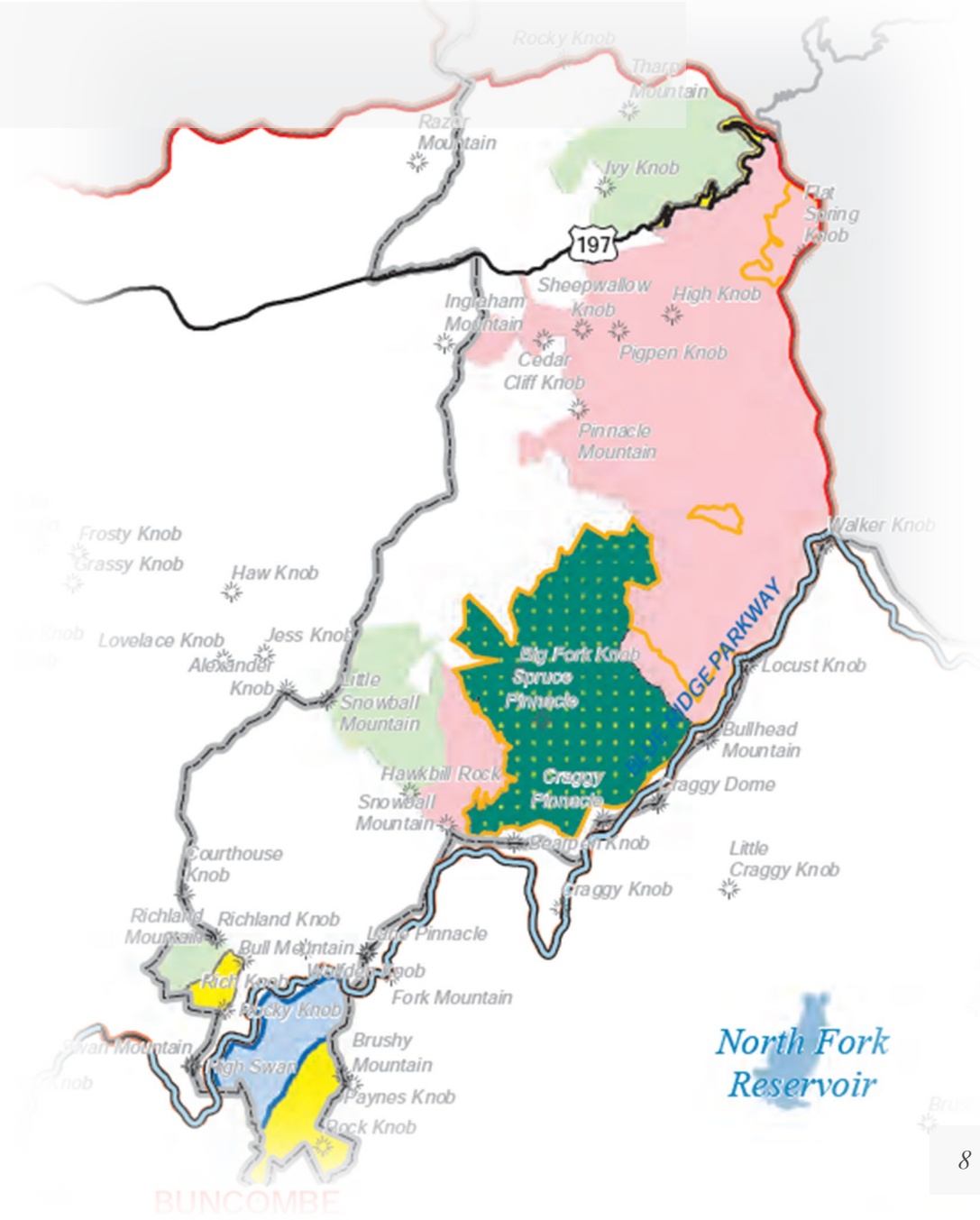
## Spotlight: Special Areas

- **Recommends 14 areas for wilderness, 49,098 acres**
  - 4 existing Wilderness Study Areas,
  - 2 new stand-alone areas, and
  - 8 extensions to designated wilderness on the Nantahala, Pisgah and Cherokee NFs
  - Broad spatial distribution across the Nantahala and Pisgah NFs and contain representation of most ecozones
  - Recommended areas are those that have the highest wilderness characteristics
- Identifies 9 **newly eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers**
- Allocates 118,917 acres into **Special Interest Area** Management Area for their unique characteristics *(including the Big Ivy/Craggy Mountains Forest Scenic Area)*
- Increases the size of the network managed to develop **old growth** characteristics by 54,000 acres to 265,000 total acres.

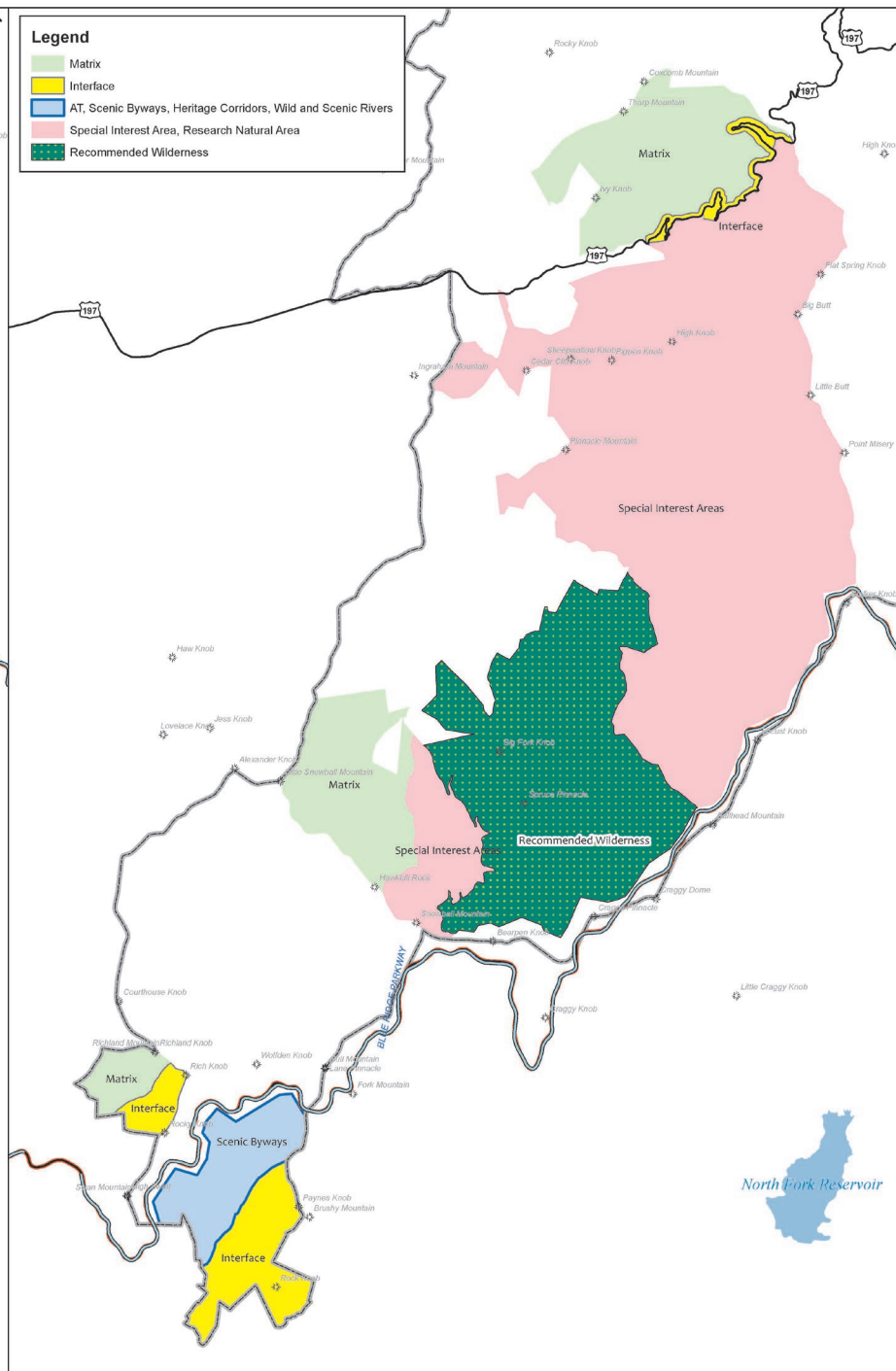
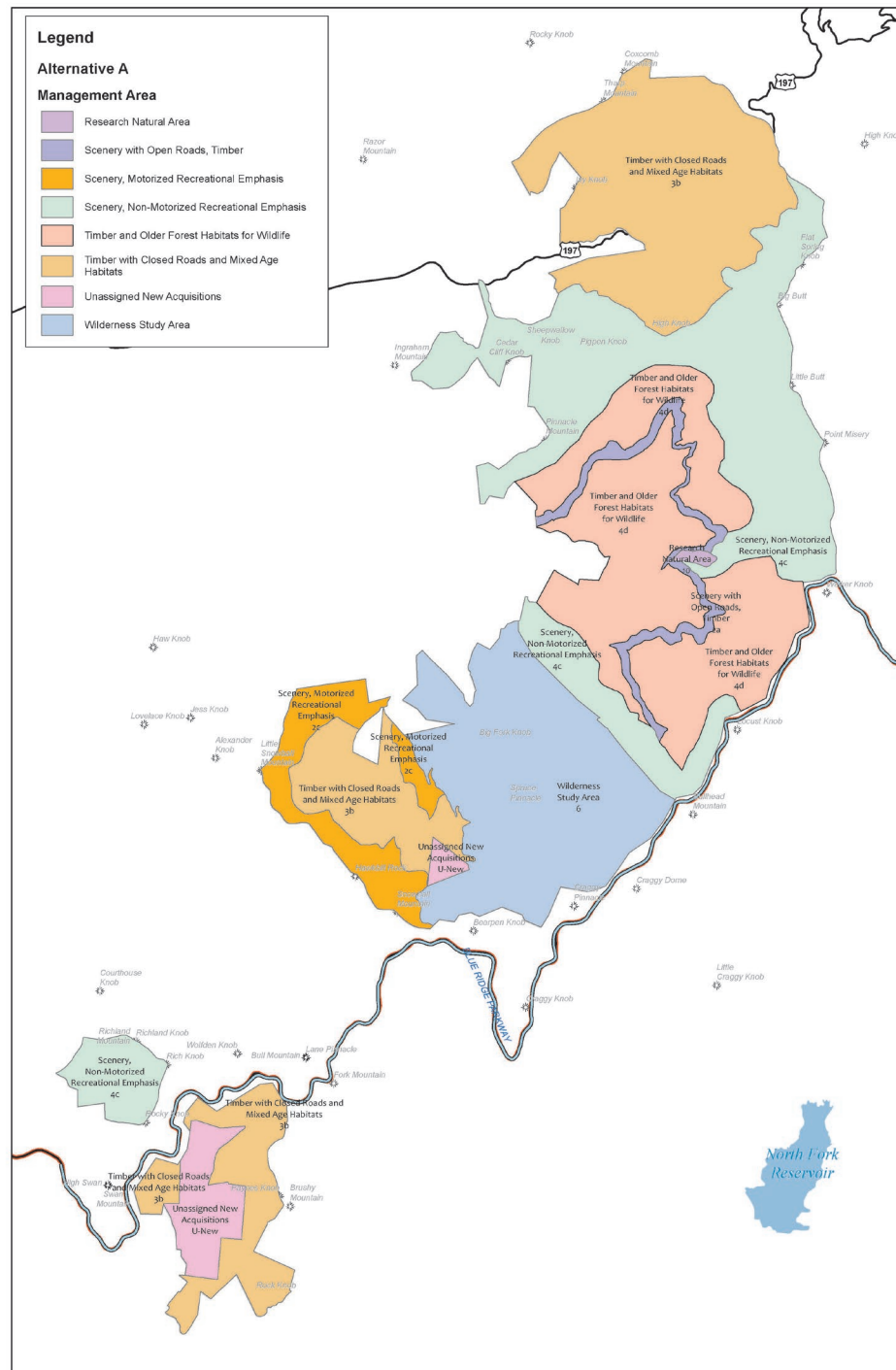
## Spotlight: Big Ivy/Craggy Mountains

Overall, the final plan responds to the Craggy Mountains proposal by:

- » Recommending an expanded area for wilderness,
- » Allocating a portion of the area as a Special Interest Area/Forest Scenic Area (11,500 acres)
- » Recognizing the Shope Creek area for its proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway and high recreation use by allocating it to Interface.
- » The areas north of SR 197 and a portion of the Snowball Mountain area will be allocated to Matrix and Interface MAs which would allow for continued vegetation management.
- » Projects in this area, as in all of the forest, would require additional public involvement during proposal development.









## Spotlight: Sustainable Trails

- » The final plan provides a framework for collaborative trail planning within geographic areas to develop a sustainable trail network that provides quality recreation opportunities while also addressing and decommissioning user-created trails.
- » The plan requires that new construction and adoption of authorized routes must be identified developed collaboratively, designed using modern principles, where
  - There is a commitment to long-term maintenance by a volunteer or partner agreement, or
  - The route resolves a critical health and safety need, or
  - The route resolves a supply-demand issue identified in geographic area goals, or
  - The route is offset by trail decommissioning or unauthorized route closure.
- » A goal was added in four geographic areas to address known supply and demand issues for equestrian and/or bicycle trail opportunities through collaborative trail planning.



## Spotlight: Sustainable Trails (cont)

### » Modified Objective REC-O-07

- (a) : collaborative trail planning to address equestrian and/or bicycle trail **supply/demand issues in specified geographic areas** needs to begin within 5 years.
- (b) : **collaborative trail planning** should occur forestwide every 5-7 years, building on the existing Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Trail Strategy.

### » Added management approach with recommended strategies for REC-O-07(b), including specific issues that could be addressed in the collaborative trail planning process and clarifies that this planning could take multiple forms.

### » Clarified REC-S-11 that collaborative trail planning to address equestrian and bicycle trail demand will be underway prior to issuing a forest supervisor order allowing equestrian (horse, stock, pack and saddle) and bicycle use only on open or gated system roads, or system trails designated for those uses.

### » Modified standards for trail development in des. And rec. wilderness to read: *Manage the trail system only for non-motorized and nonmechanized recreation uses consistent with wilderness values.* (RW-S-05 and CDW-S-03)





## Spotlight: Supporting WNC Communities

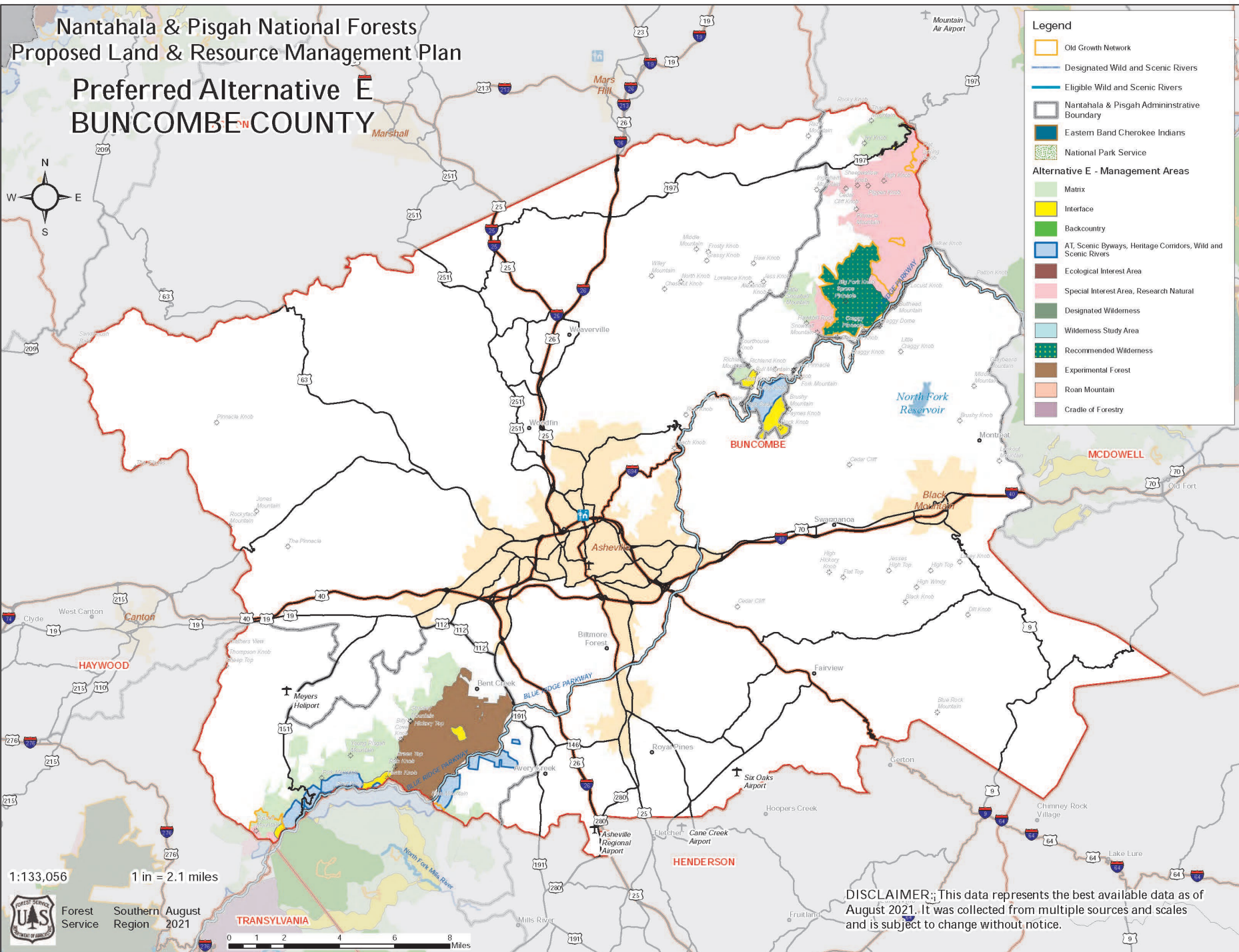
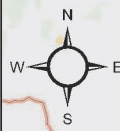
- **Desired condition:** The Forests contribute to economic vitality of the region by providing benefits, maintaining local cultures and traditions, connecting people to the land, and contributing to a greater quality of life.
- Plan sections around recreation, scenery, access, timber and non-timber forest products, lands and special uses.
- Example Objectives:
  - **Local Government Coordination:** Every other year, host a discussion at the Supervisor's Office with interested WNC local governments or their economic development offices to foster shared actions that support local jobs, attract tourism, and encourage coordination on public health and safety issues.
  - **Collaborative Recreation Planning:** Move toward a more ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable recreation program by implementing collaborative recreation planning with stakeholders and local communities to develop a strategic guidance and a shared vision for sustainable recreation for the future within five years.
  - **Open Roads:** No net decrease in the miles of open roads in Interface and Matrix over the life of the plan (*Tier 1*). Increase mileage of seasonally open roads in Interface and Matrix by between 5-10 percent over the life of the plan, prioritizing recreational access, such as hunting and fishing. Determine the amount of unneeded roads in backcountry and decommission 10 percent over the life of the plan (*Tier 2*).





# Nantahala & Pisgah National Forests Proposed Land & Resource Management Plan

## Preferred Alternative E BUNCOMBE COUNTY



DISCLAIMER: This data represents the best available data as of August 2021. It was collected from multiple sources and scales and is subject to change without notice.



# **Other Non-Forest Plan Related Updates**

**Tropical Storm Fred Impacts**

**Pisgah Restoration Initiative (PRI)**

**U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree**



# Tropical Storm Fred Impacts





# Pisgah Restoration Initiative (PRI)

Federal, state and local agencies as well as a broad range of conservation partners, have shared interest and equity in the shared stewardship and restoration goals of:

- Reducing wildfire risk in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI),
- Restoring fire-adapted forests and rare native ecosystems,
- Protecting ecosystems from non-native plants, pests, and pathogens,
- Providing clean and abundant water.







# THANK YOU!

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