



CHEROKEE COUNTY

75 Peachtree Street
Murphy, NC 28906
828-837-5527

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Candy R. Anderson, CPA, Finance Officer
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Board of Commissioners
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Roy Dickey, Member
Maria Hass, Clerk to Board

RESOLUTION CONCERNING USFS PLANS FOR NANTAHALA AND PISGAH NATIONAL FORESTS

Whereas, the USFS controls over 93,000 acres of land in Cherokee County; and

Whereas, a conservative estimate of the overall value of this land exceeds \$250 million, which equates to a potential property tax value well in excess of \$2 million; and

Whereas, lands under administrative control by the USFS are owned by the American people not the US government; and

Whereas, the USFS does not have the funds and personnel to properly manage the forest land they now control; and

Whereas, poor management by the USFS has allowed valuable timber to lie rotting on the ground instead of being harvested; and

Whereas, clear cutting and timber harvesting create habitats and food for small wildlife and allows for the growth of low vegetation that cannot grow under the canopy in a mature forest; and

Whereas, abandonment of forest service roads, either by lack of management or by design, has limited access to those areas for recreation and fire control; and

Whereas, many areas of forest service land is inaccessible to the elderly and to persons with disabilities; and

Whereas, Hanging Dog campground is the only FS campground in the county as compared to other counties in western North Carolina that have multiple campground sites with better facilities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION BOARD OF CHEROKEE COUNTY:



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1. The Cherokee County Commission is emphatically against additional land being designated "Wilderness" in Cherokee County.
2. The USFS practice of closing and gating roads because they are unable to maintain them is unacceptable. Citizens who use these access roads are for the most part willing and able to maintain these roads and clean up after use.
3. All forest service roads should be open for public use unless a demonstrable hazard to public safety exists. Under those circumstances, the USFS must repair the damage quickly or hire outside services to do so.
4. Timber is a crop and must be managed as such. Current restrictions on timber harvesting have created an economic hardship for our county in terms of logging jobs, sawmill jobs, the cost of construction lumber, and money available for schools through the Secure Rural Schools act. Both small and large tracts must be made available for logging in Cherokee County.
5. Access to trails by the disabled and the elderly is limited by improper gate placement and road closures on USFS land. Areas accessible on foot by younger people must be accessible to the disabled and the elderly by motorized vehicles. The USFS needs to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act which requires public entities to make their programs, services and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities.
6. Specific road closures, improper gate placements, and other lack of access issues identified are listed in part: Mickens Branch, Ramsey Bluff Road, Shinbone Road, Beach Creek Road, Big Stomp Tower Road, Leatherwood Road, Little Fires Creek Road, FS 625.
7. Cherokee County has only one campground on the lake while other counties have multiple sites. The USFS needs to maintain and improve Hanging Dog Campground by installing power, water, and a beach and also improve maintenance. The USFS needs to provide a second campground on the lake for the citizens of our county.
8. All USFS land must be accessible in emergency situations like forest fires.
9. The USFS needs to use common sense in solving these issues.
10. Land that the USFS cannot maintain should be left open and accessible for public use or given back to the county for the benefit of its citizens.

Authored by Commissioner Dr. Dan Eichenbaum.

Chairman

Clerk