



# NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA

USDA FOREST SERVICE, 160A ZILICOA STREET, ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

## NEWS • RELEASE

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### **Forest Service Amends Plan to Maintain Indiana Bat Habitat**

Asheville... The National Forests in North Carolina announced today new protection measures for the endangered Indiana bat. According to Larry Hayden, Planning and Ecosystems Staff Officer, "With Nantahala/Pisgah Forest Plan Amendment 10, we are formally adopting the "terms and conditions" that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined necessary to minimize future harm to the Indiana bat or its habitat.

"These new standards apply to national forest lands in Macon, Swain, Cherokee and Graham counties, where the FWS has determined the Indiana bat most likely to occur", Hayden said. "If the FWS determines in the future that the Indiana bat is present elsewhere on the national forest, then we will apply these same terms and conditions to those areas as well." Last summer, during ongoing forest plan monitoring, the Forest Service found 28 Indiana bats roosting in an old dead hemlock tree on the Nantahala National forest in Graham County.

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The Plan amendment calls for additional surveys for Indiana bats, both in the four county area, and elsewhere on the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. The endangered bat is known to use shellbark, shagbark and bitternut hickory trees or other large living trees with loose, peeling bark for shelter. Snags and hollow, den and cavity trees are also considered important summer habitat. The amendment contains standards that will ensure that these habitat components will be maintained.

Interested persons can obtain copies of Nantahala/Pisgah Forest Plan Amendment 10, and the accompanying decision notice, environmental assessment and biological evaluation at the National Forests in North Carolina website <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc>, or by calling 828-257-4860. Additional background information on the endangered Indiana bat is also available at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife website <http://nc-es.fws.gov>.

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