



NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA

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

NEWS • RELEASE

Contact: Michael Hutchins 828-682-6146

For Immediate Release August 10, 2004

Public Open House for the Bent Creek Stream Restoration Project

The USDA Forest Service and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service – North Carolina State University Water Quality Group - will hold an open house at the North Carolina Arboretum, 100 Frederick Law Olmsted Way, Asheville, NC 28806, on Tuesday August 17, 2004, from 3 pm until 7 pm to discuss the proposed Bent Creek Stream Restoration Project. Forest Service and Extension Service officials will be on hand to provide information on the project and answer questions. Information gained at the open house will be used to prepare part of the environmental assessment (EA) for the project.

The proposal is located along two sections of Bent Creek on national forest system lands administered by the Bent Creek Experimental Forest and managed under a special use permit with the North Carolina Arboretum. The project area is about five miles southwest of Asheville, North Carolina, Buncombe County, and is within the French Broad Watershed. The “Lower Reach” part of the project starts near the parking area for the Hard Times trailhead (Recreational Parking), near the Arboretum’s fenced entrance gate, and continues downstream along Bent Creek to the Forest boundary. This section of the stream is currently unstable, and is meandering laterally as it seeks to create a floodplain at a lower elevation, and this condition is discharging excessive sediment. Based on the difference in surveys completed in 2001 and 2003, the channel has moved laterally 27 feet near the beginning of the proposed project. Excessive erosion is causing adverse impacts to the stream channel and associated aquatic species.

-more-

The “Upper Reach” part of the proposed Bent Creek project is about ½ mile upstream from the “Lower Reach” and is experiencing heavy downcutting and eroding streambanks due to the flow of Bent Creek. A significant heritage site is near this reach and the downcutting is compromising the site.

The purpose of the proposal is twofold: 1) Lower Reach – restore an approximate 1,200 foot section of Bent Creek to a condition where it can use more of its floodplain to dissipate energy and reduce sedimentation caused by downcutting, thus improving water quality, and aquatic and botanical habitat; and 2) Upper Reach – through stabilization and channel redirection, correct over-widening and erosion occurring along an approximate 600-1,200 foot section of the streambank, thus improve water quality, aquatic habitat, and protection of a heritage site.

The proposal includes the following actions:

- 1) Lower Reach – raise the channel by creating a sinuous, stable channel on top of the floodplain using heavy machinery, such as an excavator. Natural materials, such as large woody debris, boulders, and woven erosion control fabric will be used to create a stable channel. Depressional floodplain areas will be constructed in some areas of the existing channels to encourage habitat found in vernal ponds. Woody debris would come from several trees cut within the new channel.
- 2) Upper Reach – “stabilize” the streambanks by placing structures in-stream (rock vanes, single vanes, and/or logs in the channel) and rocks on the streambanks to increase riffles/pools, redirect flow away from the streambanks, and stabilize eroding streambanks to reduce sedimentation and protect the heritage site. Instream structures would not change the pattern of the stream, just the profile and dimension. Logs would come from trees removed at the lower reach or trees adjacent to the upper reach.

A nationwide permit would be required from the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Army Corp of Engineers prior to excavation and placement of natural materials. All in-stream work would be implemented outside of the trout rearing moratorium (October 15 – April 15), as specified by permitting agencies.

Public scoping for this project is currently ongoing. Additional alternatives for meeting the purpose and need may be developed as part of the analysis process. The Forest Service anticipates preparation of the EA to be completed by spring 2005.

For more information contact Randy Burgess, Pisgah District Ranger at 828-877-3265; Jon Calabria, French Broad Training Center Coordinator at 828-665-2492, or Michael Hutchins, Interdisciplinary Team Leader at 828-682-6146. A copy of the project scoping notice, along with maps, can also be viewed at the forest web site: <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc>.

#####