



# **NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA**

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

## **NEWS • RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 17, 2001

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### **FIRST NATIONAL FOREST TRACT EARNS GREEN TAG**

MILLS RIVER COMMUNITY, N.C.—An historic watershed on the Pisgah National Forest southwest of Asheville recently became the first national forest tract in the United States to be certified by the National Forestry Association as a “Green Tag Forest.”

The North Mills River Management Project encompasses 3,549 acres of woodlands near North Mills River Campground. This area was once part of the fabled Vanderbilt Estate and was originally managed in the 1890’s by America’s first professional forester, Gifford Pinchot.

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According to Dr. Keith Argow, President of the National Forestry Association in Washington D.C., “The North Mills River Project is an example of the very best in sustainable management of Southern Appalachian hardwood forests.”

Developed by the National Woodland Owners Association and Association of Consulting Foresters, Green Tag Forestry is the newest of several nationwide forest certification programs. The Green Tag certificate recognizes landowners who “practice responsible and sustainable woodland stewardship.”

The goal of the Green Tag Forestry Program is “continuous improvement and productivity of a forest over time with respect for natural diversity and related multiple uses.” Any lumber harvested from a Green Tag Forest may be stamped with a logo that signifies the timber meets Green Tag standards.

To receive “Green Tag” certification, a managed woodland must be evaluated by an independent third-party professional forestry consultant, and meet a number of criteria for responsible and sustainable woodland stewardship. Columbia Forest Products Corporation, in Old Fort, NC, purchased logs harvested from the North Mills River Management Project and requested the Green Tag certification.

According to John Ramey, National Forests in North Carolina Supervisor, “While the U.S. Forest Service does not ordinarily seek out third party certification for our forest management activities, we welcome this recognition of our sustainable forest management.”

An independent consultant from the National Forestry Association reviewed the seven harvest units associated with the North Mills River Management Project and certified that they met all of the requirements to be designated as a “Green Tag Forest.”

According to U.S. Forest Service Pisgah District silviculturist Charley Bolen, “We did a thorough inventory of the land and all of its resources, not just the trees, but other resources like the wildlife, plants, and aquatic resources. This inventory helped us get a good description of the land’s condition and helped us arrive at management goals.”

“We also looked at whether the area had any habitat for endangered species, so we could protect this special habitat,” said Bolen. After the inventory, the Forest Service took added steps to modify a unit and leave more trees for wildlife habitat.

Protecting the water quality of streams was also a management goal. “To reduce sedimentation to streams, a small bridge was built instead of laying in a culvert,” the silviculturist said.

For more information on Green Tag Forestry, visit the website:

[www.nationalforestry.net/grntag/grntag.asp](http://www.nationalforestry.net/grntag/grntag.asp).

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Note to Media: for more information, contact Terry Seyden,  
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Photo with caption is available at <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/press/greentag.jpg>