

Johns Creek Watershed Assessment

6th Level HUC's

0315010303-01, 0315010303-02
0315010303-03

FY05

This watershed assessment is a Plan to Project analysis which means the process of applying the Forest Plan to a site specific project location. This assessment will become a key reference source for NEPA compliance in the future. This is not a decision document. No projects are decided within this document, only opportunities to bring specific locations into plan compliance. All will require site specific analysis and further on the ground inventories.

Chattahoochee National Forest
Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District
Armuchee Unit

Johns Creek Watershed Assessment

Index of Contents

Vicinity Map

General Description

Applicable Forest Plan Objectives

Input From Field Going Personnel

Existing Condition of the Johns Creek Watershed

Recommendations for Project Level

Description of Johns Creek Watershed Assessment Area

Johns Creek is the primary stream in the 5th level HUC located in the drainage formed by Johns Mountain, Calbeck Mountain, Horn Mountain and Mill Mountain. This 5th level HUC contains 28,160 acres of which 10,745 acres are National Forest land and it can be subdivided into three 6th level HUCs. This watershed analysis covers all three 6th level HUCs (numbered 0315010303-01, 0315010303-02 and 0315010303-03).

This watershed does not have any State of Georgia impaired streams nor Threatened or Endangered species. The most important opportunity that exists is the potential for woodlands, savannah and grasslands and to restore mountain longleaf pine.

Johns Creek 5th level HUC has the largest percentage of federal ownership (38%) of all the 5th level HUCs on the Armuchee Unit. It also has the most miles of perennial streams of all the 5th level HUCs on the Armuchee Unit. Major streams in this drainage are Johns Creek, Rocky Creek, Pocket Creek, Dry Creek and Spring Branch.

Locally, Johns Creek watershed is a favorite destination for recreation activities. This watershed contains the Pocket Campground, Keown Falls Scenic Area, Pilchers Pond, portions of the Pinhoti Trail, Johns Mountain Overlook and Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Lake Marvin is a 90 acre lake on private land and it is the focal point of the Lake Marvin Girl Scout Camp. This lake and camp is located just south of the Pocket Campground. There are approximately 11.4 miles of hiking trails and 3.8 miles of horse and bike trails in the 5th level HUC.

The three HUCs being analyzed have a well developed road system that allows ample public access and management opportunities. There are some concerns with dispersed recreation in riparian zones and their potential to contribute sediment to Johns Creek. There are opportunities for improving quail habitat by thinning and ecosystem restoration. There are 5 compartments in the Johns Creek watershed. They are compartment 915, 917, 926, 927 and 929.

Johns Creek Watershed Assessment - FY05
6th Level HUC – 0315010303-01, 0315010303-02, 0315010303-03
Applicable Forest Plan Objectives

Number	Objective	Annual District Target	Responsibility: Recommendation	Information Needs
3.1	Restore shortleaf pine	42	Stephens/GIS person: determine parameters and generate map	Parameters for shortleaf sites/GIS map
3.4	Restore open woodland	106	Murphy:	Map of mesic or xeric sites
3.5	Restore mountain longleaf pine and longleaf pine-oak	110	Murphy:	Determine appropriate sites for longleaf
3.6	Restore oak or oak-pine	128	Murphy:	
3.7	Reduce stem density in oak or oak-pine	10 – 17% of 8.E.3 areas	Stokes:	Forest type 42, 47, 53 and cond. class 8,10,12
4.1	Create/maintain ESH in riparian areas	1 – 2% of riparian corridor in each 6 th level HUC	Stokes	
7.1	Create canopy gaps in mid/late succession mesic deciduous forests	153	Do not do this if not accomplished by timber sale	
8.1	Thin shortleaf pine stands	86	Murphy:	Need GIS map of 3211 and 3213, ground recon.
8.1	Reduce hardwood midstory in shortleaf	572	Murphy:	Need GIS map of FT 12, 32; all CC; ground recon
15.2	Inventory non-native invasive aquatic species encroaching T&E habitat		Cole/Stokes	
18.1	Any smooth coneflower opportunities?		Stokes	Develop a management plan
20.1	Reserve 5% of each 6 th level HUC with at least a 1000 acres of NF for old growth	5%	Murphy	

Number	Objective	Annual District Target	Responsibility: Recommendation	Information Needs
21.1	Southern Ridge and Valley – Restore old growth community type 13 (River Floodplain)		Murphy:	
24.1	Improve sites needing soil/water restoration		Murphy:	
25.1	Identify reference streams or reference stream conditions		Breeden/Cole	
25.3	Any DNR listed 305(b) or 303(d) streams		Breeden	
26.1	Define habitat relationships for aquatic PETS species		Stokes/Cole	
26.2	Inventory 10% or a representative sample of perennial streams for biota/habitat improvement needs		Stokes	
26.3	Inventory 4 th order or greater for barriers to stream biota passage		Breeden/Cole	Need to add to GIS inventory
26.4	Identify streams for restoration of brook trout		Cole	
29.1	Maintain/update scenery management system		Completed by ID Team at project level	
29.3	Raise scenic integrity in areas where Low, Very Low or unacceptably Low			Need implementation guidance
29.4	Improve views, amenities in high use areas, vista points, interpretive trails		Thomas	
34.1	Prioritize OHV, horse, bike, hiking for condition survey based on risk for adverse effects. Conduct survey, prioritize for remedial action, and correct.		Thomas	Miles by type, Map of crossings, trail miles in riparian corridors
34.2	Biannually maintain to standard 100% of OHV, 50% of horse, 50% of bike, 33% of foot trails		Thomas:	
39.1	Develop species to site relationships for non-native invasive species		Forest level	

Number	Objective	Annual District Target	Responsibility: Recommendation	Information Needs
40.1	Reduce stem density in overstocked loblolly stands	142	Murphy:	GIS map of 3109,3110,3111,3112
40.1	Reduce stem density in overstocked shortleaf stands	326	Murphy:	GIS map of 3209,3210,3211,3212
40.3	Implement actions of gypsy moth "slow the spread"		Forest level	
40.4	Use dynamic hazard rating system for which use data is currently available. Determine existing and future hazard level for forest pests.		Forest level	
40.5	Collect data for forest pests (data not available) and use hazard rating system		Forest level	
44.1	Any known special/rare areas? Assign to Mngt. Rx 4.0 or 9.F		Project level	
48.1	Complete condition survey for specified road segments in riparian corridor, prioritize those affecting soil/water resources and correct		Holsomback:	GIS map of riparian corridor roads and crossings
48.2	Maintain roads to standard: 100% of level 5, 50% of level 3 & 4, 25% of level 1 & 2	level 5 – level 4 – level 3 – level 2 – level 1 –	Holsomback:	
49.1	Close 50% of unneeded roads/motorized trails (public access or long-term mngt.)		Thomas/Holsomback:	
55.3	Inspect SUPs annually		Murphy:	
58.1	Treat fuels in WUI zones		Brent/Hughes:	Implementation guidance
58.2	Locate and designate WUI zones		Brent/Hughes:	
58.3	Prescribe burn district share of acres		Brent/Hughes	

Number	Objective	Annual District Target	Responsibility: Recommendation	Information Needs
61.1	Refine the critical values of the Keetch-Byram Drought Code for all major vegetation-soil-landform types		Forest level	
70.1	Compile and analyze historic data on stand replacing ecological dynamics		Forest level	
74.1	Complete draft of terrestrial ecological classification system unit delineations		Forest level	
74.2	Complete a first approximation of aquatic ecological classification unit delineations		Forest level	
77.6	Provide protection for all significant heritage sites		Project level	
81.1	Maintain ownership status in GIS		Murphy: check for errors in GIS, changes made in RO	
81.2	Maintain land allocation status in GIS		Murphy: check status, changes made in SO	
81.3	Obtain 50% of available in holdings		Murphy: Identify inholdings	
81.4	Any ROW needs?		Holsomback: at project level	
81.5	Acquire additional lands along rivers		SO level	
83.1	Property lines maintained, painted		Murphy:	
84.1	Any title claims, encroachments?		Murphy:	
9.F-05	Restore canebrake	1	Murphy:	
9.F-06	Prescribe burn canebrake	1		

January 18, 2005

Johns Creek Watershed Assessment
Input from the Field Going Personnel
Management Opportunities

Vegetation Management

1. Numerous stands of mature and immature saw timber that are overstocked
2. Numerous regenerated stands that are overstocked
3. There is a 30 year old loblolly stand just outside of the northern watershed boundary that needs thinning

Roads

1. There is a state proposal to widen the Everett Springs Road that will affect NF land

Wildlife

1. Look at opportunity to create a 10 to 12 acre lake in Compartment 15 or 27.
2. Old power line ROW in Compartment 27 could be enlarged

Recreation

1. Work with the DNR to manage the dispersed recreation use on Johns Creek

Soil and Water Improvement

1. Areas along Johns Creek

Special Areas

1. The north facing cove near Pocket Gap is a unique area on the Armuchee Unit
2. Compartment 27 has a wetland that has some sphagnum, snags

EXISTING CONDITION OF THE JOHNS CREEK WATERSHED

Condition of 5th level HU

Watershed Condition Rank (WCR) is a measure that characterizes the condition of 5th level watersheds with respect to current and future sediment load increases. In order to establish WCRs, the current sediment average annual yield is determined and expressed as a percent above the baseline conditions. The next step in the process utilizes the relationship of locally-adapted species with predicted sediment increases to create a species-sediment load relationship or index (SSI). The SSI is a relatively large-scale coarse filter developed to evaluate alternatives in the Forest Plan. See Clingenpeel (2003) for further details about the SSI. This score is modified by a weighted average where the watershed occurs in more than one physiographic zone. Watershed condition or SSI is generalized into three categories of Excellent, Average and Below Average. These categories will be referred to as Watershed Condition Ranks or WCR, and are listed in Table 3- 20, FEIS, page 3-66.

Johns Creek watershed is in the category of excellent. (See Table 3-20 on next page.)

Priority of the 6th level HU

There is no impairment listing for the streams in this watershed and no relationship to T&E waters. This watershed is important for the opportunity that exists to restore open (mostly pine) woodlands, savannahs, and grasslands on the Forest, and maintain on a five-year basis (Plan objective 3.4), and restore mountain longleaf pine and longleaf pine-oak forests within the Southern Ridge and Valley ecological section (objective 3.5).

Ecological Unit Descriptions

Section 231D – Southern Ridge and Valley

Total Area in the U.S.: 6,700 square miles, 0.2 percent of U.S.

Area of Chattahoochee-Oconee NF – 64,656 acres, 8 percent of Forests

Within the Johns Creek Watershed the Southern Ridge and Valley is subdivided into 3 areas:

231Dc001 – Armuchee Ridges

231Dc003 – Shale Valleys

231Dc005 – East Armuchee Valley

Geomorphology: This Section is in the Southeastern Mixed Forest Province. The area is a folded, faulted and uplifted belt of parallel valleys and ridges, strongly dissected by differential erosion, mass wasting, fluvial erosion, and transport and deposition. About 60 percent of this Section consists of plains with hills and 40 percent consists of open high hills. Elevation ranges from 650 to 2,000 ft. Local relief ranges from 300 to 500 ft. in areas of plains, with elevation ranging from 500 to 1,000 ft. in areas of high hills.

Lithology and Stratigraphy: Rock units formed during the Paleozoic Era. Strata consist of a mosaic of marine deposits of Lower Cambrian clastic rocks (granites), and mixture of marine deposits of Cambrian (carbonates and shales), Lower Ordovician (carbonates), and Mississippian (shales, limestone, and chert) ages.

Soil Taxa: Soils are mostly soil orders Udults with some Ochrepts. Paleudults dominate upland areas underlain by limestone. Hapludults are in valleys underlain by shale. Dystrochrepts are common on side slopes of ridges. Hapludolls and Eutrochrepts are on bottomlands. Soils have an udic moisture regime and thermic or mesic temperature regime. Almost all soils are well drained. Soils range from shallow on sandstone and shales to very deep on limestone formations.

Potential Natural Vegetation: Kuchler (1964) mapped vegetation as oak-hickory-Pine forest and southern mixed forest. The predominant vegetation form is needle-leaved, evergreen trees with cold deciduous, broad-leaved forest. The principal cover type is oak-hickory, which includes southern red oak, white oak, post oak, red maple, winged elm, flowering dogwood, pignut hickory and loblolly Pine. In some areas, loblolly and shortleaf pines dominate.

Fauna: Among the fauna in this Section are white-tailed deer, black bear, bobcat, gray fox, raccoon, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, Eastern chipmunk, white-footed mouse, pine vole, short-tailed shrew, and cotton mouse. The turkey, bobwhite, and mourning dove are game birds discussed in various parts of this Section. Songbirds include the red-eyed vireo, cardinal, tufted titmouse, wood thrush, summer tanager, blue-gray gnatcatcher, hooded warbler, and Carolina wren. The herpetofauna include the box turtle, common garter snake, and timber rattlesnake.

Climate: Precipitation averages 36 to 55 in. annually. Mean annual temperature is from 55 to 61°F (13 to 16°C). The growing season lasts about 170 to 210 days.

Surface Water Characteristics: This Section has a moderate density of small to medium size perennial streams and associated rivers, mostly with low to moderate rates of flow and moderate velocity. Trellis drainage pattern has developed with bedrock structural control. One of the major rivers draining this Section is the Coosa. The Conasauga, Oostanaula, and Chattooga Rivers have tributaries on National Forest lands in this narrow Section.

Disturbance Regimes: Fire has probably been the principal historical disturbance. It previously burned over small areas between natural barriers with moderate frequency and low intensity. Insect related disturbances have resulted from southern Pine beetles. Climatic related influences include occasional droughts and ice storms.

Land Use: Natural vegetation has been cleared for agriculture on over 60 percent of the area, primarily on the productive limestone-derived soils of the valley floors.

Location on the Forests: located only on the Armuchee portion of the Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District.

Rare Communities

There is a beaver pond complex on John's Creek, south of Keown Falls. It was identified as management prescription 4F in the Forest Plan. There is another open wetland holding water year round to the east of Forest Road 231A.

Successional Stage Habitats

See map and table

Special Habitat Attributes

Johns Creek is a typical cool water stream with good biological diversity (38 fish species) and good water quality (watershed condition rank = excellent, FEIS). Gastropod diversity is good (9 species found, Johnson and Evans 2000). Dominant predatory fish is redeye bass. The stream is a seasonal trout stream, stocked by the DNR. Summer temperatures exceed 72 degrees. Freshwater mussels occur in slow riffles, long pools, and backwaters. Five species are present including Alabama rainbow (*Villosa nebulosa*) (Forest Service Sensitive species). Other Sensitive aquatic species include five aquatic insects and a fish, the lined chub (*Hybopsis lineapunctata*). Approximately _____ acres of riparian habitat exists in the Johns Creek 5th level HUC, the majority of which is under private or State ownership.

Threatened or Endangered Species

A small population of large-flowered skullcap (*Scutellaria montana*), a plant species federally listed as threatened, was relocated from private land to Forest Service land in this watershed. The status of this population needs to be evaluated. No other T or E species are known to inhabit this watershed.

Demand Species

Demand species in the Johns Creek HUCs include white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and northern bobwhite. Density estimates from the John's Mountain WMA (which comprises the majority of the Johns Creek 5th level HUC) are 20-25 deer/sq mile, 15-20 turkeys/sq mile, and 1 quail/100 acres or 1 covey/1200 acres. Currently turkey population numbers are considered fairly good and increasing; deer densities are stable to slightly increasing with fluctuations due to acorn availability. Northern bobwhite numbers have declined steadily throughout their range for over 40 years, mostly due to a lack of brood-rearing and nesting cover. Quail density in John's Mountain WMA has followed this trend as well.

Nutritious forage, insect production, and other positive habitat benefits are obtained for area wildlife through the creation and maintenance of wildlife openings. Approximately 40 acres of wildlife openings currently exist and are maintained by the Forest Service or DNR in the Johns Creek watershed.

Migratory Birds

Approximately 50 bird points exist in the Johns Creek 5th level HU, with bird point data existing from 1992 through 2004. The most commonly encountered MIS species was pine warbler, an indicator of mature pine forests. Less commonly encountered was prairie warbler, an indicator of early successional habitats.

Partners in Flight Southern Ridge and Valley Conservation Plan identify major issues pertaining to the Ridge and Valley ecological region. Some of these are pertaining to National Forest land are:

- Pine woodland restoration and maintenance
- Maintenance of mixed pine-hardwood component
- Restoring canebrakes, shortleaf pine, upland hardwood
- Restoring woodlands, savannahs, and grasslands
- Providing stable scrub-shrub habitat (large patch ESH) if not provided by private

Recreation

There are four system trails totaling 11.4 miles (see table). Total trail mileage includes the distance that designated trails follow a system road. Permitted trail users include equestrians, mountain bikers and hikers. While hikers are allowed on all trails, equestrians and mountain bikers are only permitted on sections of the Pinhoti Trail. The condition of the trails system is good overall. Some 69% of the trail mileage is maintained to standard. The Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association volunteers have assumed most of the maintenance responsibility for the Pinhoti Trail.

There are three developed recreation facilities within the watershed: Johns Mountain Overlook, Keown Falls Recreation Area, and Pocket Recreation Area. These facilities provide opportunities for camping, picnicking, hiking, watching wildlife, viewing scenery and driving for pleasure. The condition of the recreation infrastructure is good. The Pocket toilet building is being reconstructed to ADA standards in 2005.

Areas of concentrated dispersed use include camping on National Forest lands on Johns Creek south of the Pocket and hiking, biking and fishing in and around Pilcher's Pond. The road to Pilcher's Pond is managed for wheelchair access. Hunting and fishing are popular recreational pursuits. Johns Creek is stocked with trout by the Georgia State DNR. The Johns Creek watershed lies within the Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

The Hidden Creek Campground was decommissioned in FY04. The access road and the campsite spur roads were left in place, but all recreation amenities were removed. The site is now managed as a dispersed recreation site.

On private lands, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts maintain large outdoor recreation facilities at Lake Marvin and Camp Sidney Dew, respectively.

TRAIL MILES BY TYPE

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL NO.	PERMITTED USE	MILEAGE	COMMENTS
Pinhoti	3	Horseback Riding / Biking / Hiking	2.3	Mileage doesn't include Pinhoti trail mileage shared with other listed trails.
Keown Falls	20	Hiking	1.8	0.8 miles shared with Pinhoti Trail
Johns Mountain	66	Hiking	3.5	0.8 miles shared with Pinhoti Trail
Pocket	69	Hiking	3.8	
		Total Mileage	11.4	

Total miles of trail by permitted use:

Horseback riding = 1.1 miles

Mountain biking = 1.8 miles

Hiking = 11.4 miles

DEVELOPED RECREATION SITES

DEVELOPED REC SITE	TYPE	DEVELOPMENT SCALE	COMMENTS
Johns Mountain Overlook	Observation Site	3	
Keown Falls Recreation Area	Family Picnic	3	Contained within Keown Falls Scenic Area (MRX 4.F.2) totaling 230 Ac.
Pocket Recreation Area	Family Campground	4	

Scenery

The following table provides the number of acres by Scenery Management Class:

SCENERY MGT CLASS	SCENERY MGT CLASS RATING	ACRES
1	Very High	2,727
2	High	4,116
3	Moderate	3,548
4	Low	106
5	Very Low	421
	Total Acres	10,918

Heritage Resources

After reviewing the current and existing heritage information on file accumulated over the last 29 years, there is a wealth of information on the cultural resources within these three 6th level HUCs. Portions of 10 compartments have had cultural resource surveys, while two of the compartments have had no surveys yet. Approximately 1600 acres within these 12 compartments have been previously surveyed. The previous surveys have been for past timber sales, roads, land exchanges, SPB salvage, prescribed burning, recreation area improvements, and trails. These are noted on the attached maps.

A total of 44 sites are known within the previously surveyed areas, while only nine of these sites are recommended as eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register. These include a CCC camp at the Pocket Recreation Area, as well as, 2 graves or cemeteries, one historic house site, and the other five sites are prehistoric Indian sites. Those 5 prehistoric sites will be monitored and revisited as well as marked for avoidance if needed during any forthcoming proposed activity.

Lands

Private land ownership within the watershed is primarily small family tracts. However, the State of Georgia – DNR, the Girl Scouts of America, and the Boy Scouts of America own large tracts. Everett Springs is a small unincorporated community within the watershed.

Land use on private lands varies by ownership. The small family tracts are residential with associated hay fields and pasture for horses and cattle. The DNR and the two scout

organizations manage their properties primarily for recreational use, but timber management and game management are important land uses.

There are no lands within the watershed recently acquired by the Forest Service.

From the LOAP map, three tracts of private land are proposed for acquisition as follows:

TRACT	DESCRIPTION	ACRES	COUNTY
21	Calhoun Gap - 1	40	Gordon
22	Calhoun Gap - 2	80	Gordon
23	Pocket Gap	960	Gordon/Floyd

These areas are displayed on the following map.

Special Uses

This watershed contains four special uses – two power line ROWs, a telephone ROW and a road ROW. They are displayed on the following map.

Fire

This entire watershed is classified as Fire Regime 1 and Condition Class 2. Following the Special Uses map are 2 maps that show 2 periods of recent prescribed burning.

Roads

In the watershed there are 2.51 miles of ML 1 Ga. State/Private roads, 23.15 miles of Forest Service ML 2 roads, 3.87 miles of Forest Service ML 3 roads, 2.76 miles of Forest Service ML 4 roads, and 27.81 miles of ML 5 paved county roads.

OML	Jurisdiction	Miles
1 - Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	State	2.51
2 - High Clearance Vehicles	Forest	23.15
	Service	
3 - Suitable for Passenger Cars	Forest	3.87
	Service	
4 - Moderate Degree of User Comfort	Forest	2.76
5 - High Degree of User Comfort (Paved)	Service	2.76
	County	27.81
Total		60.10

The only roads that have segments in riparian areas are: Pocket Camping FDR 103 which is 0.50 miles of ML 4 a paved road; Pocket Picnic FDR 106 which is 0.03 miles of ML 4 a paved road; Everett Springs County Road segment, which is 0.60 miles of paved road. There are 166 stream crossings but these do not parallel the streams and they generally cross at 90 degrees.

Watershed Name	# of Road/Stream Crossings
Johns Creek	166

The road condition of the Forest Service roads in the watershed is generally good. Most roads are fully surfaced or have been seeded down for wildlife. Moderated sediment movement does occur during rains but this could be easily corrected with additional stone added to the roadbed and culverts cleaned so they will flow and not back up or overtop. The state and private roads are generally closed to the public most of the time but they are also in generally poor condition, no surfacing and no regular maintenance. These roads will add more sediment to the watershed per mile than all other roads. These roads need to be reshaped, drainage corrected and surfaced or seeded. The county roads are all paved and in fairly good condition. Everett Springs road which follows along Johns Creek is a narrow road with dirt shoulders which has a lot of parking along it during all times of the year for fishing, camping, or hunting. This road needs to have the shoulders surfaced to stop sedimentation into the stream.

Future needs in this watershed with regards to the roads would be to correct all the road problems as stated and then maintain all the roads to a highest standard. All the National Forest roads need to be signed with numbers and designated for horse use if decided this will not impact the road in any way. Pond Road Number 356 would be restricted for horse use because the surface is not suitable for horses. This is because it is maintained for

handicap access along this section of the Pinhoti trail. There are also some roads that have been seeded down and may need to have horse use restricted. This needs to be looked at by the wildlife folks that maintain these roads as openings.

Private Lands

Everett Springs Road is on the Federal Highways projects list to be widened, curves straightened, and in places moved away from the stream. This work will be from the intersection of the F.S. Pocket Picnic road to the intersection of Culpepper road. This could happen in the next 5 years.

Several years ago several land lots of land that belonged to Berry College was sold to the State of Georgia. This land all lies around the Pocket Camping area and along Johns Creek. Several land lots of this land had been planted in Pine. The state did a thinning in some of these plantations and more thinning and possible clear cuts will occur in the future. Small road construction is being done with the timber removal and these roads become hunter access during wildlife management hunts.

The Girl Scouts have a large area of land that joins the National Forest in this watershed. They have a large camp here with an 80 acre lake. They are expanding some every year with the addition of horse stables and pasture, more building, more housing, more trails and more general impact on the land. This trend is expected to continue on this land. Most of the larger farms in this watershed are being divided up into small farms or just into residential areas. This was done on a large tract of land joining the Nation Forest and Rock Creek county road in 2001 and this trend is expected to continue.

February 18, 2005

Recommendations for Project Level Johns Creek Watershed

6th Level HUCs – 03150103_0301/03150103_0302/03150103_0303

RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES

Management Direction

1. Focus on the vegetation management objectives found in the various Management Prescriptions in this watershed.

Major Forest Communities/Forest Cover

1. Look for opportunity to establish old growth community type 'river floodplain hardwood' along Johns Creek.
2. Inventory opportunities to restore 42 acres of shortleaf pine.
3. Inventory opportunities to restore 106 acres of open woodland on mesic and xeric sites.
4. Inventory opportunities to restore 110 acres of mountain longleaf pine or longleaf pine-oak.
5. Inventory opportunities to restore 24 acres of oak or oak-pine (focus on stands of mixed pine-hardwood attacked by SPB).
6. Reduce stem density in oak or oak-pine.
7. Inventory opportunities to create 153 acres of canopy gaps in mid/late succession mesic deciduous forests by timber sale.
8. Inventory opportunities to thin 86 acres of shortleaf pine stands.
9. Inventory opportunities to reduce 572 acres of hardwood midstory in shortleaf pine stands.
10. Inventory opportunities to reduce stem density in 142 acres of loblolly pine stands.
11. Inventory opportunities to reduce stem density in 326 acres of shortleaf pine stands.

Rare Communities

1. Protect beaver ponds on Johns Creek (23 acres), year round open water on east side of road(3 acres) from activities such as ORVs, horses, vegetation management.
2. Inventory north facing cove at Pocket Gap for rare plants/habitats.

Successional Stage Habitats

1. HUC 0301 has 2075 acres of 9H with objective 4-10% of early successional habitat (83-208 acres).
2. HUC 0302 has 1220 acres of 9H with objective 4-10% of early successional habitat (49-122 acres).
3. HUC 0303 has 1023 acres of 9H with objective 4-10% of ESH (41-102 acres) and 2453 acres of (7A, 7E1, 7E2, 4F2) with objective <4% of ESH (<98 acres)

Special Habitat Attributes

Threatened and Endangered Species

1. Inventory caves, mines old buildings for bats.
2. Plant survey at Pocket Gap.
3. Evaluate transplanted large-flowered skullcap.

Demand Species

1. Rehabilitate wildlife openings to eradicate fescue and plant more nutritious clovers and grasses or native warm season grasses where appropriate.
2. Prescribe burn blocks of watershed on a 5 year rotation or less.
3. Thin mid to late successional stands of timber to 40-50 BA.
4. Create additional wildlife openings to be managed by DNR for small game.
5. Create additional wildlife openings and protect from ORVs and horses (County line - FS 294, Phone line - FS231B, Sidney Dew – FS 360, Wildlife lane – FS 358).

Migratory Birds

1. Prescribe burn and thin pine and mixed-pine forest types.
2. Establish stable ESH habitat, including riparian area, in Management Prescriptions with goals (<4%, 4-10%)
3. Reestablish canebrakes. Prescribe burn and plant where necessary.

Forest Health

1. Thin overstocked pine stands to reduce threat to Southern Pine Beetle.

Soil and Water Improvements

1. Inventory dispersed recreation sites along Johns Creek and propose projects to rehabilitate overused sites and provide better locations for parking and camping.

Recreation

1. Rehab Pocket Picnic Area. Replace picnic tables, restore pathways. Install water line to provide drinking water hydrant to the group picnic shelter.
2. Install water and electricity hookups to select campsites at the Pocket Campground.
3. Rehab dispersed campsites along Johns Creek. Close sites within 100' of the creek or sites causing resource damage. Partner with DNR to provide dispersed camping opportunities.
4. Open system roads to horse and bike use unless there are overriding safety or resource considerations that would necessitate closure.
5. Provide handicapped hunter access. Consider FS 231 and/or FS 231A.

Scenery

1. No locations known that need improvement.

Heritage Resources

1. Complete cultural resource inventory in two remaining compartments (see map in Johns Creek WA folder).
2. Protect nine identified cultural resource sites.
3. Interpret two cultural resource sites, the CCC camp at the Pocket and the historic house site above Keown Falls along the Pinhoti Trail.

Lands

1. Partner with DNR, Girl Scouts and/or Boy Scouts to meet wildlife management objectives.
2. Partner with DNR to provide dispersed camping opportunities in the Johns Creek area.
3. Consider partnership with Girl Scouts and/or Boy Scouts to provide public outdoor recreation opportunities.

Special Uses

1. Continue monitoring special use permit sites.
2. Evaluate additional public proposals when submitted.

Fire Management

1. Treat fuels in WUI zones.
2. Locate and designate WUI zones.
3. Continue to improve condition class.

Roads

1. Complete condition survey for specified road segments in riparian corridors. Prioritize, complete NEPA and implement
2. Maintain roads to standard: level 5 – 100%, level 3/4 - 50%, level 1/2 - 25%
3. Identify and close 50% of unneeded roads and motorized trails.