

Recreation Program

On the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

Chattahoochee-Oconee land managers are working to meet the demands of increasing recreation visitation while providing quality customer service on the two national forests in Georgia. Forest Service managers are exploring ways to increase the efficient use of our recreation budget and personnel.

The goal is to provide an efficient, cost effective, accessible and customer friendly recreation program for the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forest while protecting natural resources.

One strategy undertaken on the Chattahoochee National Forest is to use concessionaires to manage the day to day operations of selected developed facilities such as campgrounds and picnic areas. The concessionaire keeps the areas clean, picks up trash, maintains the restrooms, and often, provides services not previously available. For example, during this upcoming recreation season, the concessionaire working on the Highlands Complex is planning to offer canoe rental, firewood, and a camp store at several of the Chattahoochee National Forest recreation areas.

The Forest Service is also exploring ways we can increase efficiency by minimizing how often we mow in developed campgrounds. With the use of natural landscaping and wildflower plots, we are hoping to minimize the need for weekly mowing in many of these areas. We understand that visitors may question some of the changes in the way we manage the recreation areas on the forest.

Through face to face contact and notices on our website and on our bulletin boards, we hope to explain to our customers why these changes are taking place. We will continue to explore opportunities to improve our service while continuing to meet the increasing demands of a diverse recreating public.

On the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests there are:

- 35 Developed Campgrounds
- 675 Campsites
- 10 Boat Ramps
- 2 Visitor Centers
- 2 Shooting Ranges
- 7 Overlooks

Trail Miles:

- 454 Hiking
- 21 Bike
- 133 OHV
- 138 Equestrian
- 55 Combined



Developed campsite on the Chattahoochee National Forest

For additional information on this issue, call Karen McKenzie or Larry Luckett at (770) 297-3033.

Off Highway Vehicle Use On the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests



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The Forest Service recognizes that off road vehicle use is a popular pastime for many people in Georgia. The national forests in Georgia provide the only public lands within the State where off road vehicles can be ridden. There are more than 100 miles of trails available on the national forests in Georgia specifically for off road vehicles including all terrain vehicles (ATVs).

Use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), has grown dramatically on both national forests in Georgia during the past 5-10 years. Forest Service managers recognize the need to proactively address the growing demand and subsequent resource damage from off-highway vehicles on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests.

While providing quality riding opportunities on the national forest, the Forest Service is committed to eliminating illegal use of OHVs off of designated trails on the forest. By working with our user groups, listening to our publics, and providing education and information materials to clarify where OHV users can legally ride, we are working to change the pattern of illegal use and resource damage on our Forest.

Forest Service law enforcement officers also work diligently to enforce existing laws to protect natural resources from illegal OHV use. In 2007, 110 violation notices were issued for illegal OHV use on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests. Forest Service managers are now exploring ways to increase fines and charge violators for restoration of damaged areas when individuals are found riding illegally on national forest lands.

*110 violation notices issued in 2007 for illegal OHV use.

*130 miles of designated (legal) trails available for off highway vehicle.



An illegal ATV trail on the Chattahoochee National Forest.

For additional information, call Karen McKenzie at (770) 297-3061 or Larry Luckett at (770) 297-3033.