

Restoration Initiative

On the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

Forest Service managers protect and restore healthy forest ecosystems on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests. While restoration means different things to different people, to national forest managers it means using our scientific knowledge and experience to plan and implement strategies to sustain a naturally resilient forest.

The goals of restoration activities on the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests are: to restore diversity across what is currently a relatively homogeneous forested landscape, to restore healthy stream systems, to restore fire-adapted ecosystems, to restore rare communities, and to restore viable native plant communities by controlling invasive species.

Our objectives are to maintain composition, structure and function of forest ecosystems within desired ranges of variability; restore natural communities capable of supporting viable populations of existing native and desired nonnative plants, fish and wildlife species, and; establish effective and consistent watershed management approaches with adjoining landowners to restore and sustain the health of watersheds

There are many examples of restoration activities at work on the two national forests in Georgia. For example, on the Oconee National Forest, a recent southern pine beetle outbreak has given us an opportunity to go into areas devastated by this insect and replant the area in a hardwood/pine mix. Having a diverse forest type will bring the area back to a more natural state (unlike stands of all one species planted in rows) which will in turn allow the forest to be more resistant to future southern pine beetle outbreaks.

On the Conasauga Ranger District, located in the northwestern portion of the State, Forest Service managers are looking at a variety of projects including shortleaf pine/oak restoration and longleaf pine restoration. This means planting species in areas where there was a population in the past and which are suited for the species based on elevation, location, and soil type.

Restoration projects include bringing back unique or rare communities such as the table mountain pine, highland bogs, and canebrakes.

*In Union County, 55 acres of forest land were converted to bog turtle habitat. 15 bog turtles have been released into this new habitat so far and early indications show success for this restoration project.



Bog Turtle

*200 acres of forest were restored to create habitat for the cerulean warbler, a neo-tropical migrant bird species. The population has been dwindling in north Georgia. Monitoring activity shows an increase in population so far.

For additional information, contact Ray Ellis at (770) 297-3099.

Chattahoochee Oconee National Forests – Georgia
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