

As Chairman of the North Carolina Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus (Caucus), I am pleased to join the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC), and various other groups, in submitting the comments below for the U.S. Forest Service revised Land Management Plan for Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests.

The North Carolina Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus (Caucus) is a group of committed state legislators dedicated to protecting and advancing the outdoor traditions of hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping in North Carolina. Since its inception in 2006 the Caucus has consistently worked to promote North Carolina's sporting heritage by supporting pro-sportsmen's legislation and state wildlife management objectives.

Science-driven wildlife management principles dictate that properly managed wildlife habitat is essential for sustainable and healthy wildlife populations. Well-managed lands are, typically, managed to create a diversity of habitats for a diversity of wildlife. This is done by enlisting management strategies that provide various successional habitat stages across the landscape. Specifically, active forest management that promotes early successional habitat, or young forests, is essential for many species. The current composition of the 1.04 million acres of the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests is less than one percent early successional habitat. The resulting negative impact on wildlife is detrimental for sportsmen and women and their economic impact in the local economy.

To that end, and in concert with the wildlife management professionals of the WRC, I fully support the U.S. Forest Service's proposed Management Areas 1 and 2 in the revised management plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. The roughly 700,000 acre management area will ensure healthy forests and healthy wildlife populations by promoting a diversity of habitat through necessary and flexible management tools

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Buck", written in black ink.

Senator Buck Newton

District 11 – Johnston, Nash, Wilson