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Chattahoochee NATIONAL FOREST

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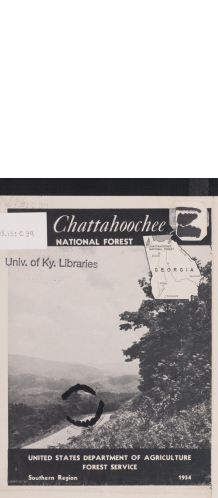
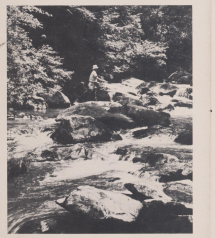


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

Southern Region 1954



Wilderness for waterfowl: one the source of water for forest streams, farms, and dependent communities. Here an angler lures fine trout in Jack's River, coiled in the bed.

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CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FOREST lies entirely in Georgia in the extreme northern part of the State. Rising abruptly from the Piedmont foothills, the forest sweeps over the famed Blue Ridge Divide like a giant wave, sloping gently to the north after crossing the crest. The great beauty of these generalized Southern Appalachian mountains is enhanced by steeply entrenched, turbulent, clear-flowing streams, sky-blue lakes, and crystal-clear waterfalls.

Embracing a gross area of more than 1¾ million acres within the forest boundary, the Chattahoochee contains 865,300 acres of Government-owned land. Nearly half of the total area, and practically all of the tillable farm and pasture land are in private ownership. The Government owns land, acquired from purposes, under the Weeks Act of 1911, involved a total of 7,000 acres scattered in Habersham and N. W. Gwinnett in Gilmer, Lumpkin, Union, and Fannin Counties. Most of the area now in the national forest was cut over at the time of purchase.

Like the other 154 national forests managed by the U. S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, the Chattahoochee is administered on a multiple-use principle for the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Water, timber, wildlife, and recreation are protected and developed, with consideration given to the relative importance of each. Fire control is, of course, the first essential of good forest management.

Water

A primary purpose of the Chattahoochee and other national forests in the Southern Appalachians is to provide vital watershed protection to the headwaters of major rivers and their tributaries. Split into four major drainages by the Blue Ridge Divide, the eastern part of the forest drains to the Savannah River and the Atlantic Ocean; the south central part drains to the Chattahoochee River for which this forest is named; the western areas drain into the Coosa River, and the northern part of the forest forms an important tributary area of the Tennessee River. These last drainages are tributary to the Gulf of Mexico.

Protected forest cover, with its undergrowth of shrubs and plants, and fallen leaves and decayed vegetation, absorbs precipitation like a sponge and releases it to the soil for maximum water absorption. Clear water is released evenly from the soil to feed the springs and streams. When forest cover is damaged or destroyed, soil loses some of its capacity for holding water, runoff from rain is rapid, causing loss of surface soil, silt-laden streams, silt-filled reservoirs, and, eventually, costly floods that cost little and damage crops and improvements. Accordingly, the Chattahoochee National Forest is protected from forest fire. Forest products are harvested with care so as to avoid damage to the watersheds. Wildlife habitat and recreation use are managed so as to conserve an abundant forest cover.

Recreation

Hunting, fishing, picnicking, camping, and hiking are popular public uses of the national forest. It is estimated that more than a half million visits are made on the forest each year for recreationists, and sojourners number more than 1½ million.

Spring is a beautiful season in the Southern Appalachians, with its succession of wildflowers and flowering shrubs and dogwoods, redbud, and rhododendron. In summer, the forest is covered in a variable of green, which turns to a kaleidoscope of red, orange, yellow, gold, and brown in fall.

Seventeen public recreation areas, developed and maintained by the Chattahoochee National Forest, are listed below:

Chenocetah.—A mountain picnic area just east of Cornelia. A nearby sturdy granite observation tower with a vast panoramic view of north Georgia mountains and valleys is open to the public.

Russell Lake.—A hundred-acre lake set in forest green invites picnickers, campers, swimmers, and fishermen from a wide radius. It is located 3 miles east from Cornelia on a scenic road recently developed from Chenocetah Tower down the mountain.

Coal Springs.—A good-sized natural spring with a small, developed picnic area, 8 miles north of Tocoa via Georgia State Route 17 and Forest Service Road 65, near Black Mountain.

Pow Wow.—A well-developed picnic area, midway between Cornelia and Toccoa on Highway 365.

George Washington Carver.—Picnic area just off U. S. 129 and near Deer Springs, 9 miles north of Blairsville.

Enota Glade.—Beautiful wooded picnic area on Enota Creek near Brasstown Bald, on State Highway 66.

Aaron Dell.—An inviting roadside picnic area in a woodland dell, on U. S. 76, 4 miles east of Suttons-Ville in northeast Georgia.

Lake Conasauga.—This attractive mountain lake area provides facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, and camping at an elevation of 3,200 feet. It is the highest lake in Georgia. There are shelters and cooking facilities for group camping. The area is located near the top of Grassy Mountain northeast of Chatsworth, 25 miles over Forest Service roads.

Lake Winfield Scott.—Another attractive mountain lake area located in the Blue Ridge Mountains, affords facilities for swimming, picnicking, camping, and nature lessons. The lake is on paved State Highway 180, 22 miles north of Dahlonega.

Poodle Creek.—A well-developed forest picnic area beside a beautiful mountain stream. It is located 8 miles north of Clarkesville on U. S. 23.

Timber

The Chattahoochee now has approximately 1 billion board-feet of merchantable sawtimber. Of the 45 commercial species found on the forest, the more important from the standpoint of sawtimber volume are shortleaf pine, white pine, yellow-poplar, white oak, chestnut oak, and northern red oak. Current annual growth is estimated to be more than a hundred million board-feet. The average annual cut for the 5-year period 1948–52 was 31 million board-feet. Timber is harvested conservatively in order to protect other values and build up a growing stock in stands of larger size and better quality. Cutting is adjusted to gradually increase the yield to sustained, maximum annual yields, and employment.

Timber products of the Chattahoochee are cut by individuals or private companies. Sales vary from one tree to several million board-feet. All sale timber valued at $1,000 or more is advertised in the newspapers and sold to the highest bidder. This system gives everyone interested in buying national-forest timber an equal opportunity to bid, and it also assures the Government a fair price for the trees.

Income from the sale of forest products on the Chattahoochee exceeds $300,000 a year. Twenty-five percent of this amount is returned to the counties in which national-forest lands are located, to be used for schools and roads.

Wildlife

One of the important multiple-use purposes of the Chattahoochee National Forest is to provide a favorable environment for wildlife. Years a state of severe depletion, the wildlife resource has been built up substantially under the cooperative management of the Forest Service and the Georgia Game and Fish Commission. Deer, which were brought into north Georgia in the middle 1940's from the Pisgah National Forest Game Preserve, had multiplied to nearly 3,000 by 1953. Other kinds of game had likewise increased.

The intensive cooperative management program requires separate wildlife management areas, 6 of which are located on the Chattahoochee National Forest. These are the 13,000-acre Lake Burton Area, 7,000-acre Lake Russell Area, 5,400-acre Chattahoochee Area, north of Helen, 16,000-acre Cherokee Area, northwest of Cleveland, 3,300-acre Blue Ridge Area, northwest of Dahlonega, and the 9,000-acre Tobesofkee Area, west of the Blue Ridge.

Regulated deer hunts, under joint management of the Forest Service and the Georgia Game and Fish Commission, are held each fall on the wildlife management areas. The number of deer to be harvested is determined by the condition of the deer herd supply and by the need to maintain the deer herd. The number of hunters is controlled accordingly. An average of about 2,000 hunters take part. Special hunting permits for the regulated hunts are available to any hunter through application and public drawings.

The game-management areas have 200 miles of fishing streams that are stocked each year with legal-sized rainbow, brook, and German brown trout.

A fish rearing station on Mill Creek in the Blue Ridge Management Area is maintained by the Forest Service and operated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Fish planting is handled cooperatively by the Forest Service and the Georgia Game and Fish Commission.

Hunting and fishing are permitted throughout the national forest, except on the wildlife management areas, and are subject to Georgia game and fish laws. More than 300,000 people visit this forest each year to fish or hunt. Information on hunting and fishing regulations may be obtained from the Forest Supervisor, Gainesville, Ga., or from the Georgia Game and Fish Commission, Atlanta, Ga.

Forest Fire Control

Approximately 1,000,000 acres on the Chattahoochee are protected from fire. In addition to the Government-owned lands, intermingled and adjoining private timber lands are included where any fire would threaten national-forest land. Some 450,000 acres of private forest land are protected from fire in cooperation with the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Fire suppression and prevention take priority over all other tasks on the national forest. The regular fire protection organization of the Chattahoochee National Forest is under the supervision of six forest rangers. The organization varies with the years and by seasons, but normally consists of 20 lookouts to discover fires, 5 of whom also act as dispatchers of crews to fight fires, and from 7 to 9 road and timber-stand improvement crews, the men on first call to fight fires. When fire danger is high, additional forces are placed on duty. Local residents, designated as national-forest firewardens, employees of the lumber industry, students in high schools and colleges—up to fifty or ninety fire fighters—are available on call to handle emergency fire suppression.

The most dangerous burning periods in the Chattahoochee area normally occur during March and April and again during November and December. Visitors and residents of the forest are urged to be especially careful during these periods. Ninety-eight percent of the fires are man-caused, many of them the result of insufficient thought or inadequate care. Destruction of public and private timber, time spent away from regular jobs by timber-cutt crews and road crews, and cost to the taxpayers for fire suppression could be practically eliminated if every one would be careful with fire.

Pigeon Creek.—A delightful roadside picnic spot on State Highway 60, 10 miles north of Morganton.

Rabun Beach.—A developed waterfront area on attractive Lake Rabun between Clarkesville and Clayton, 6 miles west of Lakemont. It affords swimming, picnicking, camping, fishing, and boating.

Red Creek Lake.—A beautiful, secluded small clear lake in the Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Area, near the Blue Ridge Divide, located on Forest Service road between Highway Gap and Margret.

The Narrows.—A small, woodland picnic area on a forest scenic road 5 miles east of Tiftum in northeast Georgia.

Unicoi Gap.—A roadside picnic spot with beautiful outlook on Blue Ridge Divide at the point where the Appalachian Trail crosses State Highway 75, north of Helen.

Wahnenauna Dell.—A woodland picnic area by a stream 4 miles east out of Clayton on Forest Service road.

Windy Gap.—Scenic outlook picnic area on State Highway 60 and on the Appalachian Trail 14 miles north of Dahlonega, affords picnicking, hiking, and excellent scenic view.

Suggested scenic roads and trails:

U. S. 19.—North from Dahlonega to Blairsville via Neals Gap (Appalachian Trail crosses here) and Vogel State Park.

Side trip.—Nine miles north of Dahlonega, take State Highway 60 north via Woody Gap to Suches; then on State Highway 180 via Lake Winfield Scott and Vogel State Park back to U. S. 19. (Paved route all the way.)

Side trip.—Almost 2 miles north of Vogel State Park on U. S. 19, turn east on State Highway 180 (paved) to Jacks Gap—then State Highway 66 to Brasstown Bald, highest point in Georgia (elevation 4,784 feet). Return to U. S. 19 over same roads or continue on 66 to State Highway 75, which is paved.

State Highway 75.—North from Cleveland to Hiawassee via Nacoochee Indian Mound, Unicoi State Park, Helen, Unicoi State Park northeast of Helen, and Unicoi Gap (Appalachian Trail crossing and loop road built in Georgia across the Blue Ridge Divide).

Side trip.—Unicoi State Park 1 mile east of State Highway 75.

Side trip.—An foot of mountain north of Unicoi Gap turn west on State Highway 66 to Brasstown Bald (paved road), highest point in Georgia, elevation 4,784 feet. Return to 75 or continue on 66 and 180 to U. S. 19.

U. S. 76.—North from Clarkesville to Clayton via Panther Creek Recreation Area and Tallulah Gorge.

Side trip.—At Lakemont turn west on Forest Service road to Rabun Beach (paved). Return to U. S. 76 same route, or continue on Forest Service road (unpaved beyond Rabun Beach) west to State Highway 197 via Lake Nacoochee and Lake Burton.

U. S. 76.—West from Clayton to Chatsworth via Clarnoge Lake and Lake Blue Ridge. This scenic connects with State Highway 75 at Hiawassee and with U. S. 19 at Blairsville.

Appalachian Trail.—From Mt. Oglethorpe, Ga., to Mt. Katahdin, Me., a distance of 2,000 miles. Of this distance, 98 miles are in Georgia between the North Carolina line and the southern terminus of the trail on Mt. Oglethorpe just south of the Dahlonega-Ellijay Highway (State 52). The Appalachian Trail Club and the Forest Service cooperate in maintaining the trail on national-forest land. Possibilities for hiking sections of the trail, between highway crossings, are numerous. Guidebooks and maps are available from the Appalachian Trail Club or by the Appalachian Trail Conference, 1718 Massachusetts Ave. N. W., Washington, D. C.

For additional information on scenic roads and trails and points of interest, contact Forest Service officials at the following points:

Gainesville, Ga.—Forest Supervisor's office, 305 West Washington St.

District Forest Rangers.—Clarkesville, Clayton, Dahlonega, Blairsville, Blue Ridge, and LaFayette.

Flame azalea in bloom. Lake Russell.

Clear mountain lake in a forest of green. Lake Blue Ridge.

Trees are a crop to be harvested, when mature, for useful products.

A steady supply of forest products assures continuing employment for local people.

This sawmill working farm is supplied in part with timber from the national forest. Helen, Ga.

Balanced farming and forestry. Cooper Creek Valley near Margret, Ga.

A picnic in the sheer—a pastime enjoyed by young and old alike.

Rock Creek Road.—A woodland trail for quiet relaxation.

End of the lookout's day. A son of area ranchers for forest. Black Mountain Tower.

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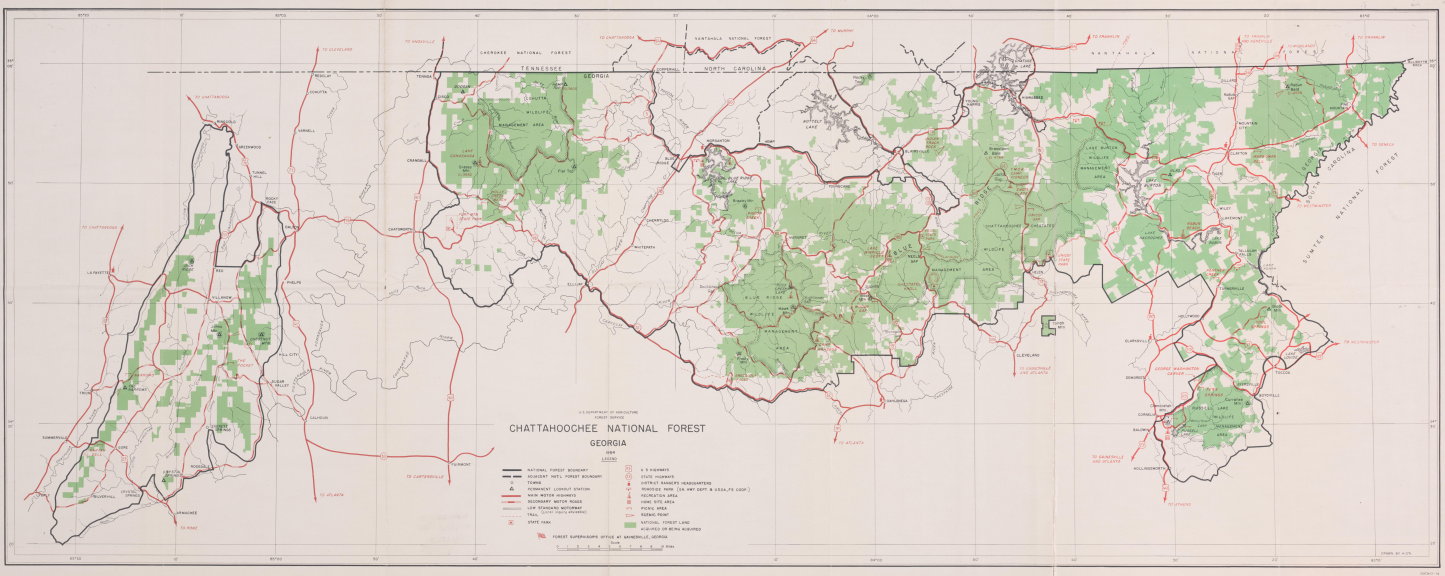
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FOREST
GEORGIA
1964
LEGEND
NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY
TOWNSHIP INTO FOREST BOUNDARY
TOWNS
PERMANENT LOOKOUT STATION
MAIN WATER HIGHWAYS
SECONDARY MOTOR ROADS
LOW STANDARD MOTORWAY
TRAIL (Foot, Horse, Snowmobile)
STATE PARK
U. S. HIGHWAYS
STATE HIGHWAYS
DISTRICT RANGER'S HEADQUARTERS
TENNESSEE PARK (TA VAY DEPT. & USDA/FS COOP.)
RECREATION AREA
CAMP SITE AREA
PICNIC AREA
SCENIC POINT
NATIONAL FOREST LAND ACQUIRED OR BEING ACQUIRED
FOREST SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE AT GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA
SCALE
MILES
TENNESSEE
GEORGIA
NORTH CAROLINA
CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST
CONFEDERATE
SENTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST
NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST
SUMTER NATIONAL FOREST
TO CLEVELAND
TO KNOXVILLE
TO CHATTANOOGA
TO MURPHY
TO FRANKLIN
TO ASHEVILLE AND ARDEVILLE
TO HIGHLANDS
TO TRENTON
TO SENECA
TO ATLANTA
TO CARTERSVILLE
TO ROME
TO DALTON
TO CHARLOTTE AND ATLANTA
TO GAINESVILLE AND ATLANTA
TO LITHONIA
TO MILLEDGEVILLE
TO ELLIJAY
TO CHATSWORTH
TO ELIJAY
TO CHATTANOOGA
LAKE CONASAUGA
LAKE WINFOLD
LAKE BLUE RIDGE
LAKE NOTTELY
LAKE ALLATOONA
LAKE SEQUOYAH
LAKE WINDERMERE
LAKE BURTON
LAKE RUSSELL
LAKE HARTWELL
LAKE SINCLAIR
LAKE OCONEE
LAKE OCMULGEE
LAKE JACKSON
LAKE SAMUELLA
LAKE WALTER F. GEORGE
LAKE SEMINOLE
LAKE BLACKSHEAR
LAKE TALLULAH
LAKE CHATUGE
LAKE NOTTELY
LAKE CHEROKEE