



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chattahoochee-Oconee
National Forests

Tallulah Ranger District
809 Highway 441 South
Clayton, GA 30525
(706) 782-3320

File Code: 1950

Date: March 17, 2003

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

The Tallulah Ranger District is asking for your comments on a proposal to alter existing road management on the Flat Branch Road (Forest Service Road 54-A) in the Coleman River Area. I would like to hear from you regarding suggestions or concerns that you might have regarding any aspect of this action.

I am proposing to install a gate on Flat Branch Road approximately 1 mile from the intersection with the Coleman River Road (Forest Service Road 54). This gate would be located just before the road crosses two wildlife openings. After installation, the gate would be in place on a permanent basis. To provide hunter access, the gate would be open during the entire deer season and small game season that ends February 28. The gate would be seasonally closed from March 1 Through September 14.

The purpose of the gate would be to reduce vehicle damage to valuable wildlife openings maintained by the Forest Service and protect the young of wildlife such as white-tailed deer and wild turkey. Currently, the 6 openings that are located past the proposed gate site contain fescue and other plant species that provide limited benefits to wildlife. The Tallulah District plans to improve these openings by re-seeding with a clover/grass mixture that is more beneficial to wildlife. These openings are being damaged by vehicle traffic. The gate would serve to reduce damage during the growing season. Also, closing the gate from March 1 through the start of deer season would prevent vehicles from disturbing wildlife that are utilizing the openings to raise their young. The location of the proposed gate is shown on the attached map.

I would like your input regarding this proposal before making a decision. This project appears to fall into a category of actions that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. However, this determination will not be finalized until after consideration of your comments and concerns. My staff may also use your comments to modify the specific methods described in the proposals.

Please send us your comments by April 14, 2003. Send your written comments to the Tallulah District address provided on the letterhead. You may also comment by phone (on letterhead), e-mail Andy Gaston (avgaston@fs.fed.us), or in person (across from Guest House Inn in Clayton). Please note that you will be sent further correspondence on this project **only** if you comment on this specific project or if you request a copy of any future related correspondence.

Feel free to contact Andy Gaston at the Tallulah District office if you have any questions about the project or the process described.

Sincerely,

DAVID W. JENSEN
District Ranger

Enclosures: Map of the project area.

