

Job Description

Georgia ForestWatch District Leader

The District Leaders (DLs) serve as the “eyes and boots on the ground” for Georgia ForestWatch. Generally, the DLs work in reaction to a proposed project by the Forest Service, over a specific area. DLs “adopt” as specific area of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, corresponding to Ranger Districts, and work to know that area as deeply as possible.

The work of the DLs may vary, depending on the stage of the proposed action, and the type of actions proposed. Over time, the following skills will be useful to acquire and the following tasks may apply:

General Skills, Abilities and Expectations of District Leaders (expected learning time: 2-5 years)

- Willingness to listen and communicate with the Forest Service, GFW staff, and other DLs with mutual respect
- Curiosity about, and appreciation for all things natural a must
- Willingness to learn from others and share knowledge and findings with others a must
- Basic writing skills and familiarity with Internet/computer communications required
- Ability to hike a minimum of 3 miles over varying terrain a must
- Ability to use or willingness to learn how to read a topographical map
- Ability to use mapping software and adhere to existing mapping protocols
- Ability to use, or willingness to learn how to use a GPS unit, and locate self and designated forest areas on a map
- Ability to take photographs or video to document ground disturbance, illegal trails and post them to blog or email them to others
- Knowledge of, or willingness to learn:
 - Identification of tree species found in North and Central Georgia
 - Identification of shrubs and understory plants found in North and Central Georgia
 - Identification of wildflowers, birds, fish, and endangered species of the area useful, but not required
- Willingness to learn the NEPA steps and process
 - Willingness to read and attempt to learn dense FS legalese and terminology and become familiar with the current Land and Resource Management Plan for one’s district on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests.
 - Willingness to provide written inputs to GFW office regarding scoping notice for your area within a short time frame
- Willingness to attend and participate in bi-monthly DL meetings (generally 2 hours, in Dahlonaga.)

- Willingness to lead occasional hikes and ForestWatch outings Willingness to share knowledge and information with other ForestWatch members

Pre-scoping Tasks (i.e. the FS has issued no written proposal – general discussion of a designated area, including possibilities of types of treatment, has been “floated”):

- Consideration of appropriateness of action by prescription area (does it conform to the Forest Plan? This task performed by Forest Ecologist, and provided to DL)
- Appropriateness of area for treatment being discussed (thinning; use of fire, herbicides, other, does it conform to the Forest plan’s management prescription for the area.)
- Identification of make-up of stand area
 - Identification of hardwood, pine, bogs, affected waterways, etc.)
 - Identification of rare or unique plant communities, if known
 - Identification of historic areas if available (Indian or early settlers)
- Identification for the potential of rare or endangered bird, fish, or other species, if known
- Optional: fill out GFW Field Inspection Report, if warranted
- Option: share your opinions of pre-scoping with District Ranger (but make it clear that your opinions are not official Georgia ForestWatch policy.) It is suggested that notes be written up and sent to both the FS Ranger and the GFW file.
- Share findings with staff, along with all pertinent findings

District Leader Scoping Notice Tasks (response to a written proposal for a designated area, including possibilities of types of treatment):

- Review scoping proposal and identify issues of concern to be discussed with staff prior to site visit
- Determine if staff, DL or both should conduct site visit and capture finding in Field Report, such as:
 - Examine entry and exit routes for planned activity (will current roads support activity?) Provide impressions of impact of activity on streams, soils, plant communities
- Pose possible alternatives as questions (ex: “Would it be possible to leave this area alone and do the work elsewhere? – Suggest an alternate area)
- Work with office staff to determine how follow up site visits will be conducted, if necessary
- Attend meetings with FS Ranger and/or GFW staff, if possible, to discuss issues and possible alternatives to the FS proposal Participate in writing of response, when possible, and coordinate with staff on timing of response.

In support of these tasks, Georgia ForestWatch will support the District Leaders in the following fashion:

- When possible, GFW shall provide special tools to District Leaders. Such materials could include topo maps/topo software of their area (at GFW's cost, if funds are available); a GPS unit, and, if necessary, a basic camera. (A special grant to cover these costs may be necessary.)
- GFW staff and DLs shall endeavor to maintain timely communications with one-another, answering emails and phone messages as promptly as possible.