

## **REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

### **HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MEETING DATE:** February 17, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Designated National Forest Areas

**PRESENTER:** Ray and Ramona Bryson

**ATTACHMENTS:** No

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

The Henderson County Board of Commissioners is requested to discuss the potential plans for the U.S. Forest to change the designation of land within the Pisgah National Forest from forest land to a wilderness designation. The Forest Service is in the middle of a years-long process to revise its land management plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. Part of the revision process involves inventorying land within forest boundaries to be evaluated to see if it meets criteria to be designated as wilderness - the highest level of protection that can be given to land managed by the federal government. Basically, the designation means the land is left in its natural condition with restrictions to human traffic.

#### **Commonly understood policies of wilderness management:**

- No roads or timber harvest (with rare exceptions).
- No motorized use except for emergencies or when necessary for purposes of administering wilderness.
- No mechanized transport, such as mountain bikes, game carts, etc.
- Area is managed for primitive and unconfined recreation with outstanding opportunities for solitude.
- Area is managed for the free play of natural processes.
- Naturally occurring fire is allowed, as much as possible, to play its natural role.
- Complex congressional guidelines provide for existing levels of grazing and necessary range improvements. However, grazing cannot be increased following wilderness designation.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

The Board is requested to discuss the information presented, and direct Staff accordingly.

#### **SUGGESTED MOTION:**

*No motion suggested.*