

Report from the Forest Supervisor

David R. Brown, DuPont State Forest Supervisor
March 4, 2008

Forest Staffing – DuPont State Forest (DSF) has eight full time certified positions. They are Forest Supervisor, Assistant Forest Supervisor, 3 rangers, 2 maintenance mechanics and an equipment operator. See Attachment A for an organizational chart. The Forest Supervisor answers to the Regional Forester in Asheville. Office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During daylight savings time some employees work ten-hour days Monday-Thursday, and take Friday off. During the summer months we have a ranger stay late each day to patrol the forest from 5:00 p.m. till dusk. The office phone number is (828) 877-6527. Rangers are on duty seven days a week year round, but are not always in the office, especially on weekends.

Bruce Redmon, Forest Fire Equipment Operator (FFEO) retired the end of May 2007. His replacement, Richard Banks was hired and started work August 1, 2007.

Some DuPont State Forest (DSF) staff members took temporary fire assignments during the past year. Bruce MacDonald worked two days on the Coxes Creek Fire in McDowell County last February. In May he was dispatched with a Division of Forest Resources (DFR) overhead team to work as a Public Information Officer (PIO) on a large fire in south Georgia. In August Bruce spent two weeks as PIO on a fire in Montana.

David Brown worked as a Division Supervisor on the Round Mountain Fire in Transylvania County, the Cate Mountain Fire in Buncombe County and the Coxes Creek Fire in McDowell County.

Last July Eric Folk and Frank Cubero worked two-week assignments with fire crews in Idaho. Then in August they took the DSF brush truck and worked 6 days on the Long Branch Fire in Robeson County North Carolina. Richard Banks worked two assignments as a full track crewman, one near Elizabeth City, NC in October, and another in Robeson County in December. Roberta Belcher worked as a Receiving and Distribution Manager on the Stag Road fire in Pender County last May, and on the Rattlesnake Fire in Idaho in August.

The DFR's Youthful Offenders (BRIDGE) Program provided over 1,000 hours of valuable assistance to the forest during 2007. BRIDGE crews from Morganton trimmed brush, cleared culvert heads and road ditches, maintained trails, and assisted with facility maintenance.

Forest Visitation for 2007 – Visitation was estimated to be 126,300 in 2007, a decrease of about 8,000 from 2006. The high price of gasoline may have contributed to the decrease. Since 2002 the forest has averaged over 120,000 visits per year. See Figure-1. Forest visitors continue to come from all over the country, but most are from the Southeast. During 2007, 55% of the visitors were from North Carolina, 19% from South Carolina, 10% from Florida, 5% from Georgia and the remaining 11% came from Tennessee, Virginia, Ohio and several other states. See Figure-2. This data is based on samples taken throughout the year from six parking lots around the forest.

Figure 1 - Annual Visitation at DuPont State Forest

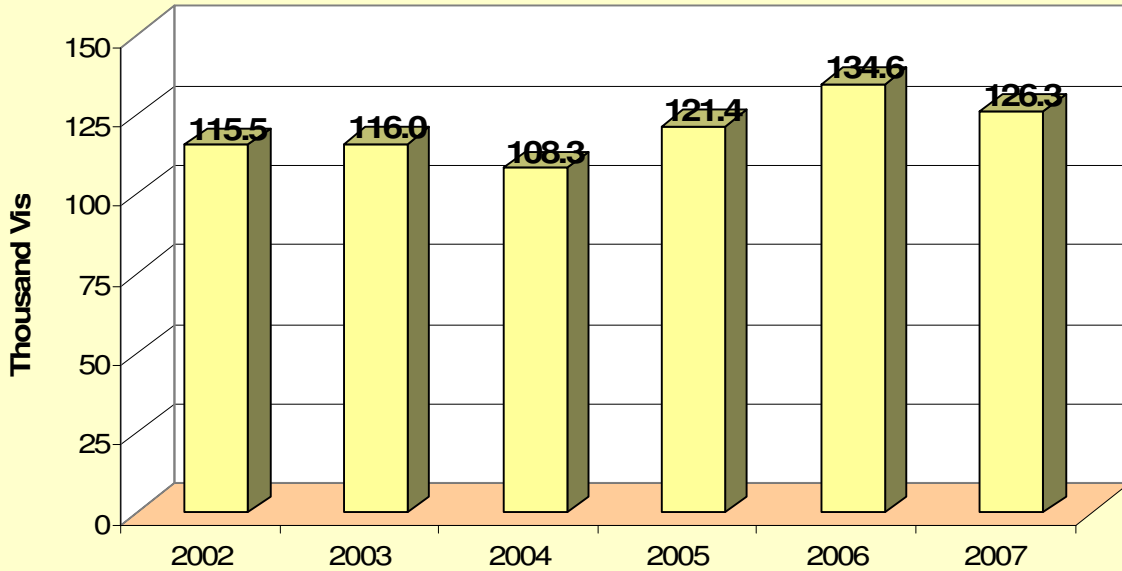
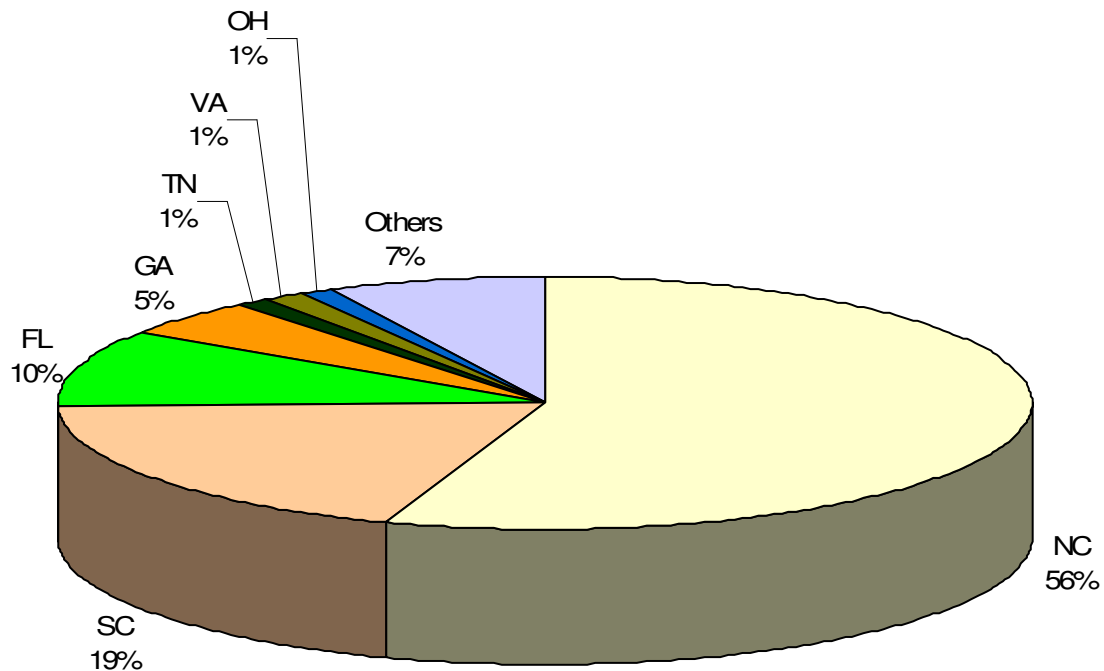


Figure 2 - Percentage of Cars by State, 2007



The three most common reasons for visiting the forest are riding mountain bikes 27%, hiking 27% and viewing the waterfalls 25%. Ten percent of the visitors are equestrians, five percent are runners, and 2.4% enjoy hunting and fishing. Other forest uses include photography, orienteering, picnicking, geocaching, wading and swimming. The first lama pack trial took place on the forest in April of 2007.

ATVs, dirt bikes and other motorized vehicles are not allowed on forest roads and trails. Dogs must be on a leash at all times, except dogs used by permitted hunters. Ceremonies, rock climbing and athletic events require a special use permit.

Volunteer Service – A total of 5,085 hours of volunteer service was contributed during 2007 (Table 1). The value of this service at \$12 per hour was over \$61,000 (Table 2). Volunteers working directly with DSF staff put in 1,057 hours. Friends of DuPont Forest (FODF) volunteered 1,597 hours. Volunteers with the Pisgah Trail Blazers (PTB) spent 805 hours maintaining trails, the barn and other facilities. PTB also assisted FODF with the Tour de Falls in May and October. Other organizations and groups that volunteered time are Western Piedmont Community College, Southern Off Road Bikers Association, Trail Dynamics, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts, Brevard College, local camps, Trout Unlimited and others.

Ten Individuals contributed over 100 hours last year. Two hundred twenty-nine individuals and groups contributed time to the forest in 2007.

Table 1 - DSF Volunteer Hours Contributed in 2007

Name	Type Organization	Hours
FODF	Friends of DuPont Forest	1,597
DuPont State Forest	Regular Volunteers	1,057
Pisgah Trail Blazers	Equestrian Club	805
WPCC	Community College	504
SORBA	Southern Off Road Bikers	376
Eagle's Nest	Camp Group	160
Trail Dynamics	Trail Construction Company	122
BSA	Boy Scouts of America	120
Trout Unlimited	Fisheries Group	112
Brevard College	Move A Mountain Day	92
DEC	DuPont Equestrian Crew	29
Others & Unaffiliated		110
Total		5,084

Table 2 - DuPont State Forest Volunteer Hours by Activity & Value, 2007

Activity	Hours	Value*
Administration	253	\$3,036
Horsemanship Clinic	105	\$1,260
Facility Repair & Maintenance	816	\$9,792
Fish Stocking	112	\$1,344
Forest Management	61	\$732
History Project	131	\$1,572
Office Work	439	\$5,268
Parking Lot Hosts	233	\$2,796
Tour de Falls	976	\$11,712
Trash Pick Up	311	\$3,732
Trail & Road Maintenance	1,648	\$19,770
Total	5,085	\$61,014

* Volunteer service valued at \$12 per hour

The DSF staff relies heavily on volunteers to conduct and assist with a variety of activities and events. Whether helping in the office, maintaining trails or assisting with construction and facility repairs, the staff could not operate at the current level without these dedicated volunteers.

Road and Trail Projects – The forest roads are maintained primarily by forest staff using DFR equipment. BRIDGE crews and volunteers help keep ditch lines and culvert heads free of leaves and other debris, and also trim encroaching vegetation. In 2007 most trail construction and renovation work was completed by Trail Dynamics, a professional trail contractor. DSF staff and volunteers did smaller projects. The Southern Off Road Bikers Association held two work weekends, and completed extensive work on the Big Rock Trail. See Table – 3.

Table 3 - DuPont State Forest Road and Trail Work Accomplished in 2007

Name	Work Completed	Completed By	Grant Project
Big Rock Trail	Rebuilt rolling grade dips & re-routed steep section	Volunteers	
Buck Forest Road	Graded, broad-based dips rebuilt, and gravel added	DFR	
Burnt Mountain Trail	Over 10,000 feet of trail reconstruction with some re-routes	Contractor	RTP
Fawn Lake Road	Graded, broad-based dips installed, and gravel added	DFR	
Guion Trail	Rebuilt rolling grade dips	DFR	
High Falls viewing area	Crosstie steps removed, new trail & steps constructed	Cont/DSF/Vol	RTP
Holly Road	Installed culvert & geotextile & spread gravel	DFR	BMP
Isaac Heath Trail	Re-route constructed & old trail section rehabilitated	Cont. & Vol.	RTP
Nooks Trail	Re-route constructed & part of trail reconstructed	Contractor	
Poplar Trail	Partial reconstruction and rolling grade dips rebuilt	DFR & Vol.	
Ridgeline Trail	Most of this trail was re-routed on a sustainable grade	Contractor	RTP
Scarlet Oak Trail	Installed a culvert at Conservation Rd intersection	DFR	
Sheep Mountain Trail	Rebuilt rolling grade dips & stabilized unnamed trails in area	DFR	
Shelter Rock Trail	Installed culvert and rolling grade dips, added some gravel	DFR	
Stone Mountain Trail	Did stabilization work on lower end	Volunteers	
Twin Oaks Trail	Re-route constructed & old trail section rehabilitated	Cont. & Vol.	RTP
Wintergreen Falls Trail	Rebuilt rolling grade dips	DFR	

Main gravel roads such as Conservation Road and Buck Forest Road are graded periodically to provide good access to the office and ranger residences. Vegetation was cut back on at least thirteen trails and minor repairs completed on several trails by the Pisgah Trailblazers and other volunteer work crews.

Most trail projects are funded by FODF and Recreational Trail Program (RTP) and Adopt a Trail Program grants from the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. See Attachment B for a summary of projects completed in two previous fiscal years. Cost of trail construction has averaged \$2.52 per foot. DSF received a \$49,972 grant from the 2006 RTP program. Approximately half of the grant work was completed in 2007, and the remaining grant funds will be used for 2008 trail projects.

Forest Management – Work continues on the forest inventory. Plots have been installed on about half the forest and data collected. The first draft of the forest management plan should be completed by April 2008.

The forest contains a little over 10,400 acres of land, but it is not all forestland. Water, grass land, bare rock, roads and utilities take up 341 acres, leaving about 10,059 acres of forestland. Of this amount 2,527 acres are included in the DuPont Dedicated Nature Preserve, leaving about 7,532 acres available for forest management. See Table – 4. Oaks are the most common timber type occupying over 5,800 acres. Mixtures of oak and pine are the second most common timber type with over 3,000 acres.

Table 4 - Forestland Acres by Timber Type

Timber Type	Nature Preserve	Not Set Aside	Total Acres
Oak	1,636	4,180	5,816
Oak/Pine	752	2,251	3,003
White Pine	64	651	715
Yellow Poplar	11	385	396
Hem/WP/YP	64	65	129
Total Acres	2,527	7,532	10,059

Several trees marked for a shelterwood harvest were cut during a chainsaw operator training course last fall. DSF staff members are working with a local sawmill to salvaging these trees along with additional storm damaged trees. A small area on White Pine Trail was marked for an improvement cutting, and many of the low quality trees have been removed for firewood.

Educational signs have been erected on Holly Road and in the Flatwoods area to inform visitors about the best management practices demonstration completed in 2006. Two small prescribe burns were conducted last winter near Hickory Mountain Road. Additional burns were not possible this winter because of the dry conditions and burning permit cancellations.

Facilities – Volunteers from Western Piedmont Community College constructed a viewing platform near Bridal Veil Falls last March. They returned in June and assisted with rebuilding the pier at Fawn Lake. On a third trip in October the WPCC volunteers reconstructed the Lake Julia Pier. FODF paid for most of the materials and provided logistical support, including meals, for the WPCC work crew. See Attachment B for a summary of the cost of facility construction for two previous fiscal years. FODF has funded 65% of the cost of materials for recent projects. DSF Staff and volunteers have provided the labor keeping the cost of projects very low.

The Lake Imaging picnic shelter will be reconstructed this spring.

Plans for the DSF visitor center and public restrooms were approved in 2007. The project went out for bid early in 2008, the contractor has been selected and work will start this spring. The appropriation of \$250,000 over two years and some additional funds that have been identified will not be enough to complete building. The contract will bring the log building up to code and provide restrooms in a separate structure nearby.

Additional funds are needed to complete the Visitor Center and provide additional parking for visitors.



Bridal Veil Falls handicap accessible viewing platform

Overflow parking at Hooker Falls has been identified as a serious safety concern. The lot can hold 50-60 cars, but at times during holidays and summer weekends up to 70 cars have been parked on both sides of the road near the Hooker Falls access area. Families with children and dogs walk along the road shoulder and in the highway. This situation has potential to cause a serious accident, and must be addressed.

Stream Bank Stabilization at Hooker Falls – The DFR Non-Point Source Unit obtained a grant and contacted work to repair the Little River stream bank above and below Hooker Falls. This contract work was completed in April 2007. The challenge was to design and construct hydrologic structures that would effectively stabilize the banks eroded by hurricanes Frances and Ivan in September of 2004, and also maintain the attractiveness of a heavily used recreational area. To date the work has accomplished both objectives. The DSF staff will construct a small kiosk to display educational material about this project near Hooker Falls.



Stream bank erosion before restoration project.



Little River steam bank after restoration project.

Events, Meetings, Reservations & Training – During 2007 over 1,600 people used DSF picnic shelters through the reservations system, and thousands more used them on a first come first served basis. See Table – 5. Vehicle permits for the disabled were issued allowing over 400 people to drive in to see the waterfalls and other sites. Over 300 people attended meetings at the forest. These included the DSF Advisory Committee, FODF Board and other meetings during the year.

FODF conducted two Tour de Falls (bus tours to three waterfalls and Lake Julia) in 2007. There was a record turnout for the October 20-21 tour with over 1,150 people participating in two days. FODF conducted several events for members during the year, including the blue ghost firefly hikes May 31 and June 1.

There were 33 special events in 2007, including 11 organized hikes, two cross country meets, a horsemanship clinic and a variety of other events. The Hendersonville YMCA conducted their third trails marathon in October attracting 300 participants. Jus' Running held a trail run in March with all the proceeds going to FODF. Running camps in the local area use the DSF trails for training each summer.

Twenty-four training sessions were conducted involving over 500 individuals. Brevard College, USAF, NCHILERT, NC Police Dog Association, FODF, DFR, and others conducted training

Table 5 - DSF Events, Meetings, Training and Reservations Summary for 2007

Activity	People
Shelter use by reservation	1,610
Access by disabled permit	409
Lodging (person nights)	37
Meeting attendees	301
Work project participants	685
Training session attendees	508
Special Event attendees	3,481
Total participation	7,031

sessions on the forest. Topics included helicopter landings, hydrology, search and rescue, chainsaw operation, trail building and safety.

Total participation for all the above activities was over 7,000 individuals. Many of these forest users were not included in the periodic parking lot counts to determine visitation.

DSF Advisory Committee – The 12-member Advisory Committee met three times in 2007 to discuss forest issues and provided recommendations to the Division of Forest Resources. The committee represents the following interest groups: conservationists, sportsmen, bikers, equestrians, forest industry, local governments, professional foresters, business, and forest landowners. Members are appointed by the State Forester to serve three-year terms, and can be reappointed if willing to serve additional terms.

Accidents & Injuries – The forest is not a controlled environment, and there are many hazards. Public safety is a huge responsibility. Slick rocks around the waterfalls pose the highest life threatening risk. One man died as a result of a fall at Triple Falls last August. There was another fatality as a result of a fall at Wintergreen Falls in 2005. On average there are six serious accidents each year, most resulting from falls while hiking, riding a bike or riding a horse. There are many more minor injuries requiring first aid or assistance getting back to a parking lot. Bee stings are a common occurrence but usually do not get reported unless there is an allergic reaction. Hikers are the most likely forest users to be injured, because hiking is the most common form of recreation on the forest. Mountain biker injuries are second followed by injuries to equestrians.

Land Acquisition - E. I. DuPont De Nemours and Company donated 33.1 acres of property to the State of North Carolina to be added to the forest. The deed was transferred on January 31, 2008. This valuable donation gave DSF employees and the public access to Conservation Road below Lake Julia Dam. It allows visitors to go from High Falls to Bridal Veil Falls, a walk of about 1.5 miles, instead of having to go back to the parking lot and drive 8 miles around and walk in from the south side of the forest.

DuPont plans to donate additional property in the future following extensive clean up of industrial waste deposited in the 1950s and 60s. Currently test wells are being monitored to determine the extent of pollution. A clean up plan will be devised and implemented over the next six to eight years.

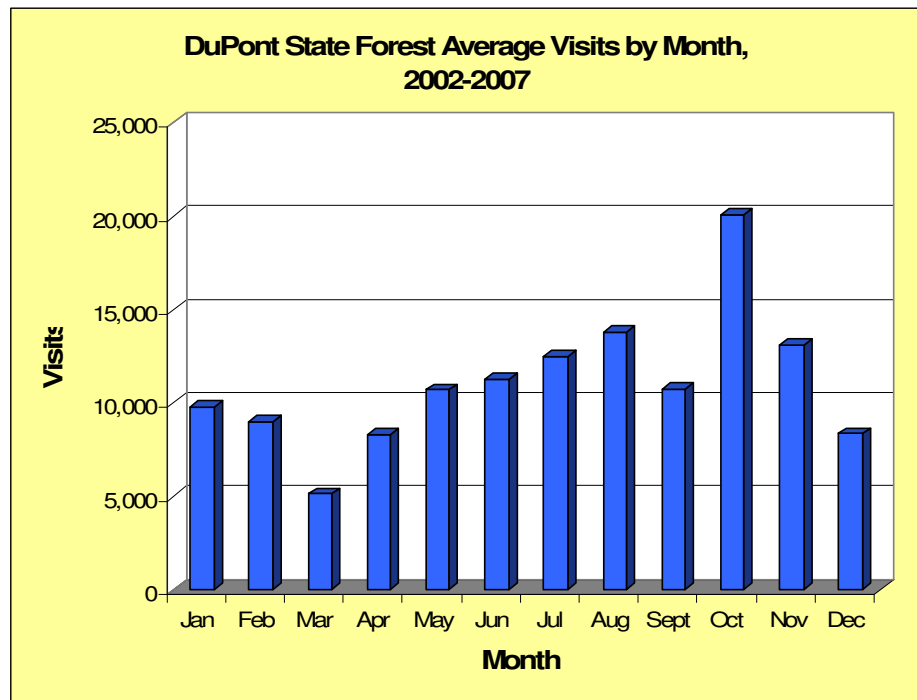
DFR received a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust



Wintertime view of Lake Julia from the property recently donated to the state by E.I. DuPont De Nemours and Company.

Fund to purchase 18 acres of property from The Brigade of Light, a small conference center on Reasonover Road. The property includes part of the Reasonover Creek Significant Natural Heritage Area. This purchase will also provide additional buffer between Reasonover Creek Trail and private property.

How Many Visitors Are Enough? - Visitation is expected to remain high, as people discover all the forest has to offer. A recent analysis of attendance indicated that an average of 20,000 visitors come to the forest each October. August and November are the second and third busiest months with over 13,000 visits each. Even the winter months of December, January and February average over 9,000 visits per month. Two questions must be addressed. First, how many visitors can the forest accommodate without degradation of the visitor experience and damage to the natural resources people come to enjoy. Second, how can the number of visitors be limited to the level that is deemed appropriate.



David R. Brown, Forest Supervisor
DuPont State Forest PO Box 300
Cedar Mountain, NC 28718-300
Phone: (828) 877-6527

Attachment A – DuPont State Forest Organizational Chart

