

The Greeneville Sun

Federal, state agencies to improve Cherokee national forest

Aug 10, 2021

The USDA Forest Service and Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) have signed an agreement that will allow the state to help in forest restoration on the Cherokee National Forest. The agreement allows TDF to improve and maintain desired ecological conditions and to restore forest health and resiliency.

“Proactive and sustainable forest management practices provide the mechanism to ensure healthy, productive, and resilient forests,” said Tennessee State Forester David Arnold. “A strong partnership with the Forest Service is key to ensuring our agencies meet our objectives with protecting, conserving, and enhancing Tennessee’s forest landscape.”

“This agreement puts us in a great position to make the most of the natural resources we manage together at a landscape level,” said Forest Supervisor JaSal Morris. “Collaboration across organizations is immensely valuable in providing long-term improvement to the forest and benefits to the public.”

Forest restoration will be done through the removal of ecologically inappropriate tree species, especially white pine and Virginia pine. Several tools will be used to move towards the desired conditions, including harvesting and selling timber. Harvested areas will be reestablished with native hardwood and pine species. Implementation of these timber stand improvement and forest regeneration practices will also support local rural jobs and businesses.

Reforestation with appropriate species improves the resiliency of the forest to challenges like insect and disease, fire, and variations in climate. Restoration also benefits wildlife habitat and native diversity of rare species and creates valuable wood products and local jobs. Overall, restoring these forests to their highest ecological potential will better position them to endure climatic, ecological, and abiotic threats and benefit all who depend on the ecosystem services they provide.

Cherokee National Forest, covering over 650,000 acres, is located in ten east Tennessee counties along the North Carolina border. It is the largest single tract of public land in the state.

Source: https://www.greenevillesun.com/news/local_news/federal-state-agencies-to-improve-choerokee-national-forest/article_e817a0be-c339-5470-aaf8-a6f5f321d810.html