

## Elk to remain a protected species N.C. panel votes down delisting

By Karen Chavez  
March 6, 2010  
Asheville Citizen Times



The people have spoken. And the subject of their affection? Those giant, lumbering creatures called elk.

After receiving overwhelming public support for keeping elk on the state's list of Special Concern species, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission this week voted down a proposal to delist the animals.

"We received a lot of public feedback and there was a large segment of the population who were against the proposal," said Mallory Martin, deputy director of the commission in Raleigh.

"(Voting down the proposal) wasn't so much a biological concern to the impact of the elk herd, as it was the level of interest and passion, and excitement generated by having the elk in North Carolina."

The proposal to delist the elk was one of more than 60 proposed hunting and fishing rule changes the commission brought before nine public hearings across the state in January.

The hearing in Sylva for Western North Carolina public comment drew more than 100 people who overwhelmingly

spoke out in favor of keeping the elk a protected species in the state.

Elk, a species native to North Carolina, were reintroduced to the Cataloochee area of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2001 with an experimental herd of 52 animals.

The herd now numbers 110 animals, which have been popular with tourists. In 2008 visitation to Cataloochee was 148,000 people, more than double from when the elk first arrived.

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## The American Chestnut Foundation Needs Citizen Scientists to Test Potentially Blight-Resistant Chestnut Seeds

PR Newswire

ASHEVILLE, N.C., Feb. 4 /PRNewswire/ -- The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF®) has taken an unprecedented step toward the restoration of the American chestnut tree by offering a limited number of its most advanced and potentially blight-resistant seeds to both new and existing sponsor members for planting and testing. This is the very first time any of these seeds have been made widely available to members and it comes on the heels of over 26 years of intense evaluation by scientists throughout the natural range of the chestnut. Members can test these seeds for blight-resistance and American growth characteristics.

When the chestnut blight came through the eastern US in the first half of the 20th century and killed nearly four billion American chestnut trees, all seemed to be lost for this once mighty species. Since 1983, TACF has remained focused on a seemingly impossible goal: to restore the American chestnut to the eastern United States. With this seed distribution program, TACF is one step closer to the



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restoration of this crucial species but there is much more to be done.

TACF President and CEO Bryan Burhans said, "TACF wants to share this milestone with our members that have worked so tirelessly to get us to this stage. For too many years we've had members call us, wanting the opportunity to plant these trees in their fields and backyards. We now have

a limited number of seeds available for testing and evaluation. By planting these chestnuts, you become a citizen scientist for TACF. It is such an exciting time to be a member."

Burhans notes, "This is just an early stage in a very long process. There is no guarantee that these seeds will have adequate resistance to the blight, although we are hopeful. Testing by our members will help the organization evaluate resistance across a wide geographic range under diverse planting conditions."

In spring 2008, TACF, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and University of Tennessee-Knoxville, planted five

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## Elk to remain a protected species N.C. panel votes down delisting - continued

The idea behind the delisting proposal was to better manage the elk when they roam outside the protected boundaries of the national park and onto private property, said District 9 Commissioner Martin Lewis.

“We need a way to manage the elk who come off the park looking for food,” said Lewis, who lives in Asheville. “We need to ensure the safety of elk. We all agree we need to do something. We need to have a management plan.”

Under current management policies, if landowners have a problem with elk damaging their property, they must contact the National Park Service, which works with the wildlife commission to issue the landowner a depredation permit. Under the delisting proposal, landowners would have been able to bypass that authority.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park spokeswoman Nancy Gray said park

superintendent Dale Ditmanson and chief of resource management and science Nancy Finley sent a letter to the commission during public comment period speaking against the delisting proposal.

“We supported the existing regulations staying in place. We did feel that the delisting would create opportunities for persons to kill elk that might not be warranted,” Gray said.

Gray said that the park is working on an environmental assessment and long-term management plan for the elk, which is now under review by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the state wildlife commission and the U.S. Forest Service. It will be released for public comment in about a month.

“We need a working collaboration,” Gray said. “We realize elk will roam.”

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## The American Chestnut Foundation Needs Citizen Scientists to Test Potentially Blight-Resistant Chestnut Seeds - continued

hundred potentially blight-resistant chestnuts on three national forests in the southeast. After one year, the seedlings are thriving in a forest setting. The availability of these very same seeds to both long-time TACF members as well as new sponsor members is another step in a \$16 million program that includes more than 60,000 trees and encompasses six generations of breeding.

For information on becoming part of this exciting new venture, please contact TACF at (828) 281-0047 for membership particulars and benefits.

### About TACF

The American Chestnut Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization headquartered in Asheville, NC. It has nearly 6,000 members and chapters in 17 states. The demise of the American chestnut tree due to chestnut blight has been called the greatest ecological disaster of the 20th century. TACF was established in 1983 with the sole purpose of restoring this majestic tree to its native forests in the eastern United States. Today, TACF's research farms encompass nearly 160 acres and more than 60,000 American and Chinese chestnut trees which are part of its national breeding program. For more information about TACF or volunteering to help restore the American chestnut, visit our website at [www.acf.org](http://www.acf.org).



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## Exploring the Working Forest Easement Options for the Family Forest

The Forest Education and Conservation Foundation, with grant support by the N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund is sponsoring four regional workshops for forest landowners this year. The workshops will provide practical information about conservation easement opportunities for private forest landowners. Dates and locations are as follows:

- April 13 Dennis Wicker Center, Sanford
- April 15 City Hotel & Bistro, Greenville
- May 11 Statesville Civic Center, Statesville
- May 12 Crowne Plaza, Asheville

Dr. Mark Megalos, who works with Extension Forestry program at North Carolina State University will moderate the sessions. The workshops will start at 9 a.m. and conclude by 3 p.m.

Landowners and others interested in registering for one of these four workshops may register online using this web page, print the form and mail a check, or contact Kelley McCarter at N.C. State University at (919) 515-9563 to register by telephone.

Professional foresters and land managers wishing to attend will qualify to

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## Exploring the Working Forest Easement Options for the Family Forest - continued

receive 3.5 hours of Category I-CF continuing education credit hours from the Society of American Foresters.

### Sponsors and Seminar Planners

The Forest Education and Conservation Foundation a non-profit [501C(3)] organization affiliated with the N.C. Forestry Association. The Conservation Easement Advisory Committee received a grant to offset the cost of holding the 2010 workshops to keep them affordable. This planning and sponsors committee includes representatives from:

- Conservation Trust for North Carolina
- Forest Education and Conservation Foundation
- N.C. Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
- N.C.DENR - Office of Conservation and Community Affairs
- N.C. DENR - Division of Forest Resources
- N.C. Division of the Society of American Foresters
- N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
- N.C. Forestry Association
- N.C. State University Cooperative Extension Forestry
- N.C. Tree Farm, ATFS
- N.C. Association of Consulting Foresters
- N.C. Woodlands
- Southern Appalachian Multiple-Use Council
- Triangle Land Conservancy

## Sandhills' beauty burns bright



By Ryan Elting  
Fayetteville Observer

Here's a reason the U.S. Forest Service changed Smokey Bear's message a few years ago from "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" to "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires." That's because while wildfires can be dangerous to both people and ecosystems, some fire is absolutely essential for forest health. Fire suppression that was the norm for most of the 20th century has had a dramatic effect on North Carolina.

Longleaf pine forest once blanketed the southeastern United States; today just 3 percent of that area remains in longleaf. While development and forestry practices played a role in the shrinking of the longleaf forest, fire suppression also was responsible. Fire was once a regular visitor in the Sandhills: low intensity fires, often caused by lightning, fueled by grass and pine straw. These fires kept the forest open, allowing sunlight to penetrate to the forest floor and reducing buildup of dangerous fuel.

Fire suppression, resulting from an attitude that all fire was bad, changed that. Open longleaf forests quickly filled with scrub oaks and undergrowth and longleaf seeds could no longer germinate. As the sunlight was choked out, other plants and animals paid the price. The red-cockaded woodpecker, which makes its nests exclusively in living longleaf pine, became endangered. Plants such as native wiregrass became rare. The Nature Conservancy and other conservation partners have spent a lot of time in the past couple of decades putting fire back on the ground in the Sandhills to restore the longleaf ecosystem.

For the first time in its history, North Carolina state government is formally recognizing the importance of such controlled or prescribed burning. Gov. Beverly Perdue has proclaimed Feb. 7-13 as "Prescribed Burning Awareness Week," adding North Carolina to a handful of other states that have such recognition.

This is the season for controlled burns in the Sandhills. On a nice day, with

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## Sandhills' beauty burns bright - continued

the right weather (not too windy, too wet or too dry - controlled burning is largely weather-driven), you'll probably see smoke rising across the area. Large landowners such as the military at Fort Bragg or the Wildlife Resources Commission at the Sandhills Game Lands are putting matches to the ground in an effort to keep the forest open and the longleaf growing. The Nature Conservancy and a host of other organizations are working busily to help the area live up to the North Carolina state toast: "Here's to the land of the longleaf pine."

As we commemorate this week, now is a good time to visit one of the incredible places in your backyard that is maintained by controlled burning. The N.C.

Division of Parks and Recreation has done extensive controlled burning at Weymouth Woods-Sandhills Nature Preserve in Southern Pines. Another great example is the Conservancy's Calloway Forest Preserve near Aberdeen. Both sites are open year-round and provide visitors with the opportunity to see what the southeastern United States looked like many years ago.

And, if regular fire and the people who conduct controlled burns have their way, more areas across the Sandhills will be restored to their historical beauty - to all of our benefit.

*Ryan Elting is director of The Nature Conservancy's Sandhills Project Office.*

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## Plantations Can Provide the Same Ecosystem Services as Natural Forests

by Staff Writers

Washington DC (SPX) Feb 04, 2010

Science Daily

*Well-designed plantations can mitigate social, economic and environmental pressures*

Not all plantations need to be the biological deserts that have come to characterize large-scale, industrial plantations. According to scientists in a paper out in February's issue of the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, well-planned plantations can actually alleviate some of the social, economic and ecological burden currently being placed on natural forests.

In addition, these biologically diverse, multi-purposed plantations can mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon, off-setting deforestation and reducing ecological strain on natural forests.

"Forest plantations have acquired a bad reputation," says Alain Paquette from the Universite du Quebec à Montreal, who co-authored the study with colleague Christian Messier.

"But not all plantations are so-called 'biological deserts.' We believe that plantations have a legitimate place in the sound management of forests, and our aim is to provide some basis for an open discussion and to promote the use of well-conceived plantations."

The researchers looked at the types of plantations currently in use, the benefits and challenges associated with each and the best methods for creating the greatest social, economic and environmental return. For example, the authors examined the constraints plantations place on protecting natural forests, mitigating the effects of climate change and restoring ecological services.

In terms of the protection of natural forests, the researchers found that plantations were capable of alleviating the ecological stressors placed on natural forests when used within an integrated forest zoning approach-that is, when rules are enforced to ensure any increase in plantations is matched by protected areas within the same landscape.

"We have to look beyond the rows of uniform trees and evaluate plantations over larger temporal and spatial scales," says Paquette. "Well-planned, multi-purposed plantations can help preserve high diversity, old-growth forests that would be cut otherwise."

As for climate change, the authors reference a direct link between climate change and deforestation: land-use change accounts for roughly 25 percent of global greenhouse-gas emissions. In order for plantations to help limit the effects of climate change, the researchers contend, nations need to address the current economic demand for dead trees over live ones.

The researchers argue that, although even industrial monocultures can produce meaningful ecological services when managed correctly, "we can do better locally by using biologically diverse, multi-purposed plantations," says Paquette.

"Theory and experimental works suggest that even more services could be produced with carefully chosen mixtures of species to promote the optimal use of resources."

In contrast to the common perception of plantations as biological deserts, the researchers describe the necessary elements for a well-planned, biologically-diverse plantation system.

By improving plantation design through, among other methods, less intensive soil preparation, mixed-species vegetation and greater tolerance of other species in long-term maintenance, the authors believe that such plantations can deliver social, economic and environmental services similar to that of natural forests.

As a follow-up to their research, Paquette and colleagues are testing the potential benefits of allocating a small proportion of land over a one million hectare territory in eastern Canada to well-planned, multi-purposed plantations.

"Our goal is to use low intensity forestry practices and increase the proportion of protected land in the area," Paquette says. "We hope our model will support the practical applications of well-planned, biologically-diverse plantations worldwide."



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## Woodland Steward Series Expands Statewide



The N.C. Division of Forest Resources is again joining forces with the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association, the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA Forest Service Cradle of Forestry in America and others to host the Woodland Steward Series throughout the state.

Woodland owners interested in managing their land and developing an understanding of the basic principles of woodland stewardship are invited to participate in this unique educational event. A team of land management experts from federal and state agencies, universities and the private sector are coordinating efforts to offer this Woodland Steward Series through the Biltmore Forest School. Sessions include hands-on activities and classroom instruction. Introductory information on a wide variety of land management topics will be discussed.

The workshop series will consist of four 1.5 day sessions led by natural resource and land management specialists, including both hands-on activities in the field and classroom instruction. The courses include:

- **Discovering Your Land: Basic Land Management Skills** introduces participants to setting goals and objectives, understanding local wildlife, and basic skills such as map and compass use, tree identification and soil sampling. This workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., April 9 and from 9 a.m. to noon April 10 at Dan Nicholas Park in Salisbury.
- **Native Landscaping & Water Management** focuses on designing with and planting native plants, urban forestry techniques, storm water best management practices and other water features such as ponds and streams. This workshop will be held at the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., April 23 and from 9 a.m. to noon April 24.
- **Woodscaping Your Woodlands & Firewise Management** gives an overview of managing forest land, insects and diseases, secondary forest products, and the protection of home and property by becoming Firewise. This

workshop will be held at Jordan Lake Educational State Forest near Chapel Hill from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., May 7 and from 9 a.m. to noon May 8.

- **Stewardship, Recreation, & Liability** covers the basics of land ownership liability, planning trails, finalizing goals and applying new knowledge and skills in the field. This workshop will be held 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., May 21 and from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. May 22 at Montgomery Community College in Troy.

Participants in the workshops are required to register. Attendance in at least three of the four workshops is required to graduate. The cost for each workshop is \$40 per participant and \$20 per spouse or family member. One set of educational materials is provided for the family. Lunch will be provided on the first day of each workshop.

Credit toward N.C. Environmental Education Certification is available, as well as CEU credits. The workshops will also count as electives toward Asheville Board of Realtors ECO Certification.

Advance registration is required. For more information and registration materials on this opportunity that you cannot afford to miss, visit [www.cradleofforestry.org](http://www.cradleofforestry.org) or contact Amy Garascia, program coordinator, at [amysworkshopinfo@aol.com](mailto:amysworkshopinfo@aol.com) or (828) 884-5713 ext. 26. Registration includes lunch, snacks and workshop-related materials and handouts. The registration deadline is one week prior to the session.

The course is sponsored by: the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, U.S. Forest Service, N.C. Tree Farm Program, N.C. Zoo, Montgomery Community College, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Land Trust for Central N.C., N.C. Division of Soil & Water Conservation, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

For more information and registration materials, visit [www.cradleofforestry.org](http://www.cradleofforestry.org) or contact Amy Garascia, program coordinator, at [amysworkshopinfo@aol.com](mailto:amysworkshopinfo@aol.com) or (828) 884-5713 ext. 26.

# Wildlife Commission Adjusts Rulemaking Cycle

Constituents Advised of Changes to Public Hearing Schedule

## February II

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission voted in February to move its annual public hearings from January to September as a part of adjustments to its rulemaking cycle.

“Adoption of rules on an annual basis is critical to meeting our conservation objectives,” said Gordon Myers, executive director of the Wildlife Resources Commission. “Prior to making these changes, the commission’s rulemaking cycle was severely impacted by delayed implementation of rules. These impacts were felt by our sportsmen and created a great deal of confusion. By adjusting our annual rulemaking cycle, we are able to better ensure timely adoption of rules while providing better service to North Carolina’s sportsmen.”

Each year, the commission adjusts hunting, fishing and trapping seasons in response to wildlife population changes, wildlife conservation objectives, or public needs and desires. Public comment on proposed rule changes is a critical component in the decision-making process. The commission will continue to provide a variety of public input options including online, written and face-to-face opportunities. The Commission will notify constituents of these opportunities months before the public hearings begin.

This is not the first time the commission has adjusted its rulemaking cycle. Prior to the 1980s, inland fishing and hunting regulation proposals were developed on separate schedules; public hearings were conducted in

September for inland fishing regulation proposals and April for hunting regulation proposals. In 1983, the commission integrated the cycles and began conducting a single set of public hearings in the month of March. Several years later, as a result of changes in the Administrative Procedure Act, the commission moved the hearings again to the month of January. The supporting purpose of the change was to ensure that regulations could be implemented prior to hunting and trapping seasons.

For more information on the rulemaking process, download the brochure “From Proposal to Regulation.”

## About N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

Since 1947, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has been dedicated to the conservation and sustainability of the state’s fish and wildlife resources through research, scientific management, wise use, and public input. The commission is the state regulatory agency responsible for the enforcement of fishing, hunting, trapping and boating laws and provides programs and opportunities for wildlife-related educational, recreational and sporting activities. To learn more, visit [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org).

Get N.C. Wildlife Update — news including season dates, bag limits, legislative updates and more — delivered to your Inbox from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

Go to [www.ncwildlife.org/enews](http://www.ncwildlife.org/enews)

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