



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chattahoochee-Oconee National
Forests
Blue Ridge Ranger District

2042 Highway 515 West
Blairsville, GA 30512
706-745-6928
Fax: 706-745-7494

Lamar Paris
Union County Commissioner
65 Courthouse St #3
Blairsville, GA 30512

Dear Lamar,

This letter is in response to your proposal regarding placement of a target range on National Forest System (NFS) lands located on the Chattahoochee National Forest. It is intended to update you of our findings and specific agency policy as we move into the next phase of processing your application for use and occupancy of NFS lands.

After initial and second level screening of your proposal for compliance with regulations found at 36 CFR 251.54, I have determined that the application, dated April 24, 2018, has passed the screening process. Thus, I am formally accepting your special use application. However, there are valid concerns with the proposed target range location and in order to proceed with processing the application at this stage, fulfillment of cost recovery and environmental analysis requirements must be determined as explained below.

Cost recovery fees are assessed to cover administrative costs incurred by the Forest Service in processing special use applications and monitoring of authorizations for compliance with permit terms and conditions as found at **36 CFR 251.58**. Cost recovery fees are different from the land use fee which will be assessed when an authorization is issued. Cost recovery fees will be estimated based on the Agency's processing costs including review and approval of an environmental analysis and will be addressed in a separate cost recovery agreement.

The use and occupancy of federal land as described in your proposal will require agency compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures (FSH 1909.15). The scope and extent of federal land and resource use included in your proposal will determine the degree of environmental analysis, public participation, and time that will be included in the evaluation of your application. The environmental analysis will need to address the effects of this proposal on public health and safety as well as biological, cultural, recreational, scenic and other socio-economic resources. Viable alternative sites for the proposed target range will need to be considered, along with the proposed site, in the environmental analysis. With this in mind, I have enclosed a map of NFS lands in Union County (as well as relative proximity to private property) that can be utilized to help identify potential alternative sites. Once the final site is



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selected, as guided by the environmental analysis, a site condition assessment followed by an Environmental Stewardship Plan and a Safety Plan will be required before a special use authorization can be issued. These plans will be reviewed by an environmental engineer and approved by the USDA Forest Service.

As a next step forward, I propose that you, Sheriff Mason and I meet along with pertinent Georgia Department of Natural Resources staff and representatives from the Union County Gun Club to further define the process and milestones necessary to bring this project to fruition. If you would like to invite our Congressional Representatives to this meeting, I am open to that as well as I do plan to keep our delegation briefed on the status of this proposal.

Sincerely,

/s/ ANDREW L. BAKER

ANDREW L. BAKER

District Ranger