

The Talking Forest

Holmes Educational State Forest

Fall 2022

Ronin McQuaid's Eagle Scout Project

Here at Holmes Educational State Forest (ESF), rangers are always excited to provide Eagle Scout project opportunities to local scouts. Most recently, Ronin McQuaid of Troop 703 in Brevard, built and installed four benches along the Forest Demonstration Trail. On the day of installation in early October, Ronin and his crew carried in all the tools and materials they would need to complete the project. This was no easy task considering two of the installation locations are located along the steepest section of trail here at the forest. The necessary tools and materials included shovels, post hole diggers, levels, power drills, prebuilt sections of bench as well as screws and multiple 80-pound bags of concrete. To accomplish this feat, Ronin's crew had to pack as much as possible into their backpacking packs and hike up the mountain. Two benches were installed along the steep switchbacks on the north side of the mountain. Another bench was installed near the pond and the fourth was positioned along a hilltop on the southwest side of the forest in an aging stand of white pine. These benches immediately provided a better experience for visitors hiking our longest trail and many have expressed gratitude for the new resting opportunities. On behalf of our visitors and N.C. Forest Service staff, rangers at Holmes ESF would like to thank Ronin for choosing our forest as his project beneficiary! Be sure to stop and sit a spell next time you encounter one of these benches along the trail!

If you or someone you know is looking for a place to complete their Eagle Scout Project, please call (828) 692-0100 or email holmesesf.ncfs@ncagr.gov to inquire about current needs here at the forest.



Visit all of North Carolina's State Forests. From the coast to the mountains, we have ten state forests across this great land. See the NCFS website for more information, www.ncforestservice.gov.

Holmes Educational State Forest

1299 Crab Creek Road
Hendersonville, NC 28739

828-692-0100

holmesesf.ncfs@ncagr.gov

Forest Hours:

March 1—Oct. 31

Closed Mondays

Tuesday—Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday—Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Nov. 1— end of February

Closed Mondays

Tuesday—Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed Saturday—Sunday

Closed State Holidays

Youth Group Campground:

March 1 — Nov. 30

Visit our website for more

Information.

www.ncesf.org/holmes.html

Susan Fay, ESF Supervisor

EJ Dwigans, Educational Ranger



DSRF continues to help HESF with forest improvements!



With the help of Bob, Jimmy, and Sammy at DSRF, we added new split rail fencing to both parking lots. Photo taken by Susan Fay.



Work is progressing on our newest kiosk. Photo by Susan Fay



Holmes Educational State Forest hosts FFA

For several consecutive years, Holmes ESF has hosted the N.C. Future Farmers of America’s (FFA) Regional Forestry Competition for high schools in western North Carolina. A big shout out goes to Andy VonCanon, western regional agriculture education coordinator for N.C. FFA, DuPont State Recreational Forest (DSRF), and District 1 personnel with the N.C. Forest Service who were worked behind the scenes to test the students on forestry tool identification, sawtimber estimation, orienteering, and tree identification.

The western region includes schools from Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Transylvania, Buncombe, McDowell, Haywood, Madison, Mitchell, Yancey, Rutherford, Henderson, and Polk counties.

This year, 55 students participated in the competition and Charles D. Owen High School from Buncombe County took first place in the senior division.

A special thanks to Brian Rogers, Bo Dossett, Elijah Charrette, Jeremy Waldrop, Denton Gravely, Lee Wicker, Jordan Luff, Weston Vandenabeele and Josh Miller.

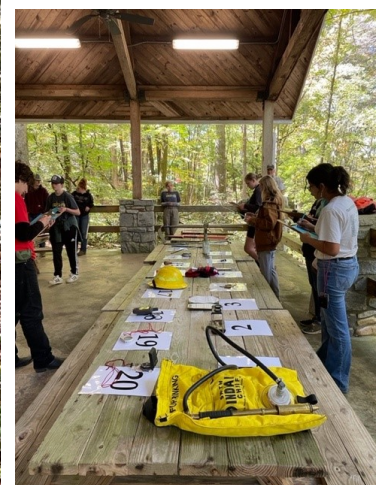
NC FFA Fun Facts

In 2022, there were more than 32,000 FFA members in North Carolina, making it the fourth largest state association in the U.S.!

There are 355 chapters across the state, with 66% of the students being in high school and 34% in middle school.

There are 579 agriculture teachers administering 26 agricultural education courses.

The N.C. FFA Center Camp is in White Lake and is the second oldest FFA camp in the nation. In its 90 year history, the camp has seen 150,000 students participate in learning, leadership and personal growth skills.



Photos by EJ Dwigans

Free Educational Offerings At HESF

Inclement Weather Policy

Hikes may be canceled in the event of inclement weather such as thunder and lightning. Notifications will be sent out via phone and email. Due to the unpredictability of weather patterns in our area, cancellations may occur as late as the morning of the scheduled meeting date.

Liability Waiver Forms

Individuals or groups participating in activities and/or programs at HESF will need to sign a liability waiver before or upon arrival.

Look for upcoming programs in our next newsletter for 2023.

New Winter Projects

Beginning this winter, staff at Holmes ESF will be working on a couple different projects that will enhance visitor experience and improve some of the forest's infrastructure.

First up will be a forest-wide hemlock treatment for woolly adelgid. Technicians from the Hemlock Restoration Initiative (HRI) will be by in December to provide treatment to the forest's hemlock trees. For more information on hemlocks and the HRI, visit savehemlocksn.org.

We will also complete a three-paneled kiosk that will be used to provide visitors with general forest information, self-guided activities and plant identification resources.



Lastly, our forest staff, with the help of DSRF's information and education branch and maintenance department, will start working on the much anticipated forestry center project. Our forestry center is getting an upgrade that will include fresh new exhibits and sitting space to enhance on-site teaching activities. Funding is being provided by the N.C. Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee (NCSFISIC) through a grant that was submitted by Kirsten McDonald, DSRF's information and education supervisor.

***Look for our next newsletter in
Winter 2023.***



The North Carolina Forest Service is a division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
Steve Troxler, Commissioner

