



Fiscal Note for Paynes Branch Game Land

15A NCAC 10D .0295 – PAYNES BRANCH GAME LAND IN FORSYTH AND STOKES COUNTIES

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Fiscal Impact: State Government: Yes
Local Government: Minimal
Private Impact: Yes
Substantial Economic Impact: No

Authority: G.S. 113-134, 113-264

The proposed rule will establish the Paynes Branch Game Land. The Commission, in partnership with The Conservation Fund, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation, recently acquired 209 acres of property on either side of Paynes Branch stream in Northern Forsyth and Southern Stokes Counties. At 209 acres, this would be a relatively small game land, however the property is located in a region of the State where few public hunting opportunities currently exist. Adding this property to the Game Land Program as a three day per week area will provide recreational opportunities for hunters, trappers, wildlife viewers, and other outdoor recreationists. Additionally, this rule will establish requirements related to deer seasons and prohibit horseback riding and target shooting.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The agency anticipates a one-time cost of approximately \$5,340 to establish the new game land. This includes \$840 for the boundary survey and markings (2.80 miles x \$300/mile), and \$4,500 for one new parking area.

Local Impact

Creating a new game land may increase the number of people visiting local businesses, which may result in an increase in the purchase of goods and services as they relate to the needs of the recreational user groups (e.g., food, gas, camping supplies, etc.). Increased spending at business may result in additional tax revenue for State and local governments. The Paynes Branch Game Land is relatively small in size, so the total amount of tax-based revenue generated due to its establishment is likely to be small, especially relative to larger game lands. The Commission is unable to give an exact estimate as tax-based revenue varies depending on the activities allowed on the game land, its proximity to local amenities, and its size.

This game land may increase nearby home values, increasing property tax revenue, although the amount is highly uncertain.¹

Private Impact

This new game land will provide additional opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation. Game land users will have increased opportunities for wildlife-based recreation and 209 acres of undeveloped land will be conserved with public access. There is currently not a game land in this area of the State and wildlife and outdoor recreationists from surrounding municipalities can take advantage of this public land for hunting, hiking, and wildlife watching.

There are few residential homes immediately adjacent to the property therefore noise impacts on nearby residents are anticipated to be minimal. The proposed rule will prohibit target shooting and horseback riding. Given the game land's small size, allowing target shooting would raise safety concerns and could lead to excessive litter. Additionally, the properties' small size and lack of trail network is not conducive to horseback riding. The three-day per week designation will provide balance between the expected hunting pressure and game species management.

¹ Casola, William R., Peterson, M.N., Wu, Y., Sills, E.O., Pease, B.S., Pacifici, K., 2021b. Measuring the value of public hunting land using a hedonic approach. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*. 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2021.1953196>.

Game lands provide significant economic contributions to local economies through the market impact of visitors participating in outdoor recreational activities. In 2018, North Carolina game lands received over 2.2 million visits. An evaluation conducted by NC State University researchers estimates that these visits generated over \$180 million in game land related expenditures (gross), contributing a net added value of \$140 million to the state's economic activity.²

Adding an additional game land will bolster state revenue and recreational visits. The value of game land access to recreators can be assumed to be at least as much as they spend per trip, although there are additional use and non-use benefits that are not captured in trip expenditures. This same study found that non-licensed activity users (e.g., hikers, bikers) spent an average of \$119.83 per trip while hunters and anglers spent on average \$84.19 per trip.²

The concept of willingness to pay (WTP) can provide a more comprehensive estimate of how much users value game lands, including those aesthetic, environmental, and inter-generational benefits that cannot be measured directly in the market through expenditures or home values. However, WTP values come with a greater degree of uncertainty; the estimates are sensitive to the research methods used to elicit the values including the design and delivery of the contingent valuation exercise.

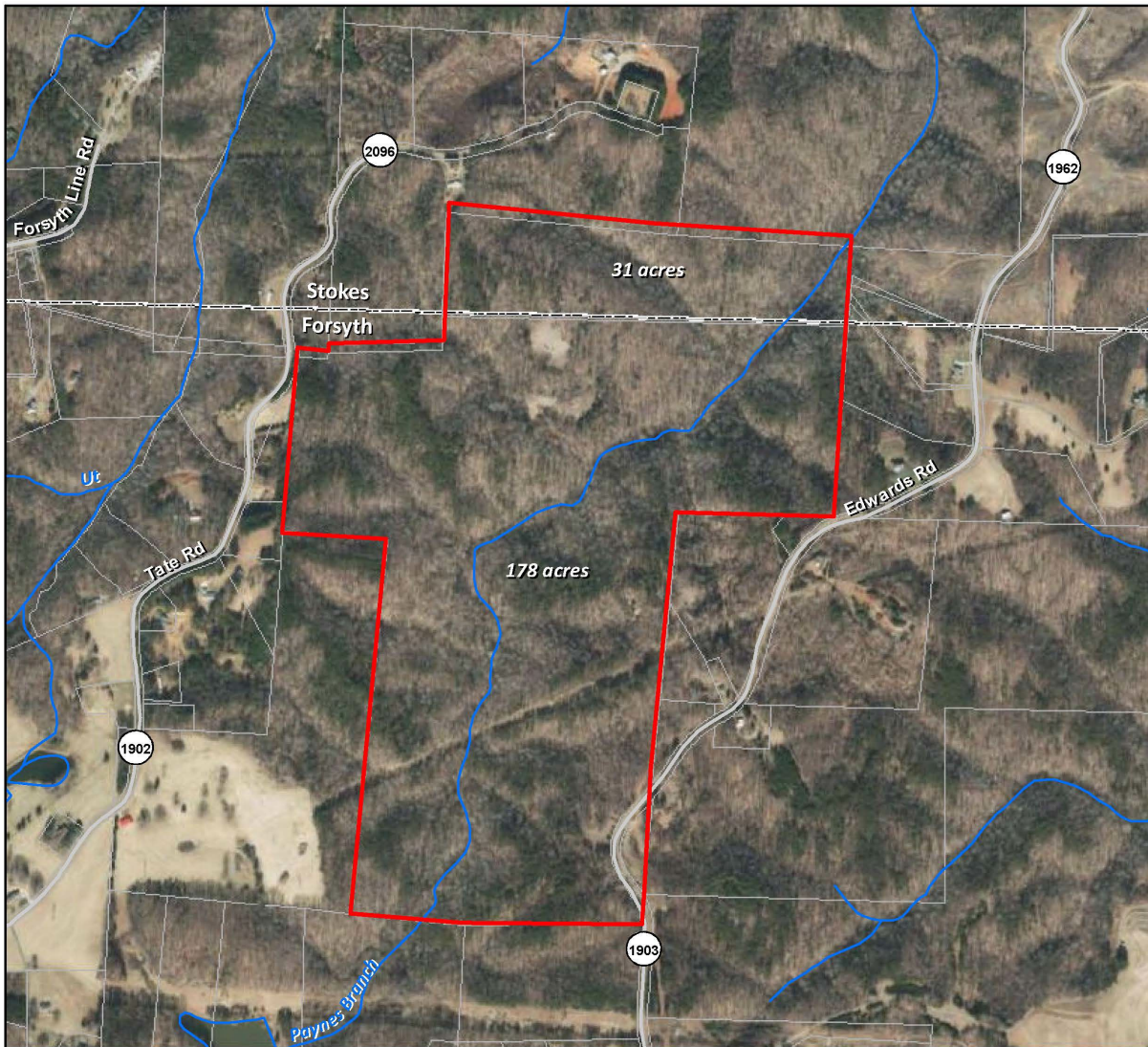
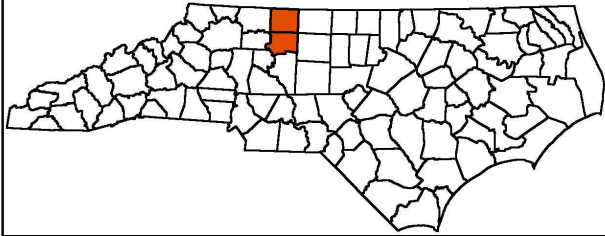
An associated study assessed users' willingness to pay (one time) to conserve 20% of North Carolina's game lands. Values varied by user type. Non-licensed users valued the proposed conservation at \$130 compared to licensed users at \$120. Dual users that pursue both licensed and non-licensed activities valued game lands most highly at \$160. More detailed studies would be needed to determine willingness to pay on an annual or per-acre basis, and to determine these values for both users and non-users³.

This game land may increase home values in the area as well. Studies in NC have demonstrated that proximity to game lands provide moderate positive value to nearby properties in some locations, even within rural settings and when controlling for access to other sources of public land. This is especially true for areas where there are no other nearby high-value natural amenities such as beaches and national parks¹.

² Casola, W.R., Peterson, M.N., Sills, E.O., Pacifici, K., Moorman, C.E., 2022. Economic contributions of wildlife management areas in North Carolina. *Forest Policy and Economics*. 140, 102747
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2022.102747>.

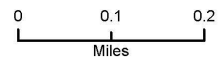
³ Casola, W.R., Peterson, M.N., Sills, E.O., Pacifici, K., Moorman, C.E., 2023. Conservation motivations and willingness to pay for wildlife management areas among recreational user groups. *Land Use Policy*. 132, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2023.106801>.

**Payne Branch Tract
Forsyth and Stokes Counties
209 Acres Total**



February 23, 2023

 Payne Branch Property



1 **15A NCAC 10D .0295 PAYNES BRANCH GAME LAND IN FORSYTH AND STOKES COUNTIES**

2 Paynes Branch Game Land is a Three Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open day of the All Lawful Weapons Season for
4 Deer With Visible Antlers through the second Wednesday thereafter.
- 5 (2) Target shooting is prohibited.
- 6 (3) Horseback riding is prohibited.

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