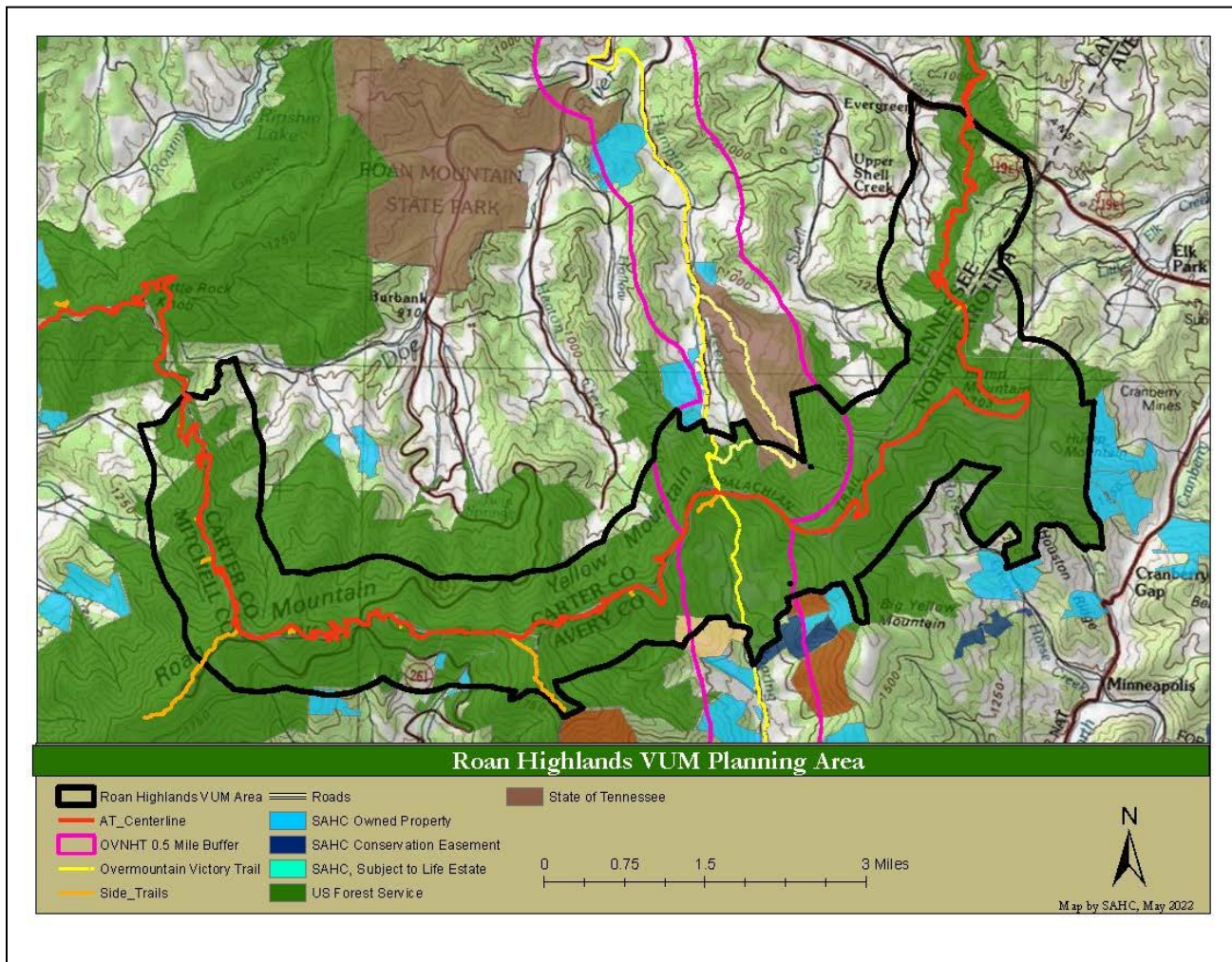


Roan Highlands Visitor Use Management Committee

The Roan Highlands Visitor Use Management (RHVUM) Committee was formed in the Spring of 2022 to bring together key management partners and stakeholders to collaborate and develop a short-term and long-term plan to address visitor use management issues and to protect the ecological integrity and character of Roan Highlands; particularly Round Bald, Jane Bald and Grassy Ridge.

Committee Members

Currently, the RHVUM Committee is composed of representatives from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), US Forest Service (USFS) – Pisgah National Forest (NC) & Cherokee National Forest (TN), Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC), and the Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club (TEHCC). Through public outreach efforts, we will be seeking local representation from the local Roan Highlands communities in North Carolina and Tennessee to join the committee.



Committee Purpose

Develop and implement an adaptive visitor use management plan using the [Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework](#) to protect the ecological integrity and character of the Roan Highlands (see map above of the areas included, i.e. Hughes Gap to US19E) while providing for appropriate recreation opportunities and facilities, and addressing growing visitor use along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST) and other “backcountry” areas in the Roan Highlands, with particular focus on Round Bald, Jane Bald, and Grassy Ridge.

Mission: Develop and maintain an appropriate balance for the protection of wildlife and rare plant habitats while minimizing the detrimental impacts from heavy visitor use to provide the public with an outdoor recreational experience in an outstanding scenic viewshed of the Southern Appalachians.



Vision

Our vision for the future of the Roan Highlands is to safeguard the biodiversity and exemplary wildlife and plant communities of this outstanding natural heritage area through thoughtful restoration, maintenance, and management.

Partnerships, scientific research, and management actions focus on increasing the resiliency of the area to climate change, addressing recreational impacts, minimizing invasive species, and addressing other threats.

In our vision, the Roan Highlands remains a premier destination for high quality, low impact recreational opportunities while preserving the ecological integrity of this unique place, now and in perpetuity.

Interagency Visitor Use Management (IVUM) Framework

<https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/>

The RHVUM committee is currently applying the framework and working through the 14-step process in a collaborative manner.

The purpose of the framework is to provide cohesive guidance for managing visitor use on federally managed lands and waters. The framework is a planning process for visitor use management and can be incorporated into existing agency planning and decision-making processes. It is applicable to virtually all visitor use management situations and conditions on federally managed lands and waters.

The framework elements are:

- **WHY** - Build the Foundation—Understand why the project is needed, and develop the project approach.
- **WHAT** - Define Visitor Use Management Direction—Describe the conditions to be achieved or maintained and how conditions will be tracked over time.
- **HOW** - Identify Management Strategies—Identify strategies to manage visitor use to achieve or maintain desired conditions.
- **DO** - Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, and Adjust—Implement management strategies and actions, and adjust based on monitoring and evaluation.



Steps:

1. Clarify project purpose and need.
 2. Review the area's purpose and applicable legislation, agency policies, and other management direction.
 3. Assess and summarize existing information and current conditions.
 4. Develop a project action plan.
- Outcome:** Understand why the project is needed, and develop the project approach.

Steps:

5. Define desired conditions for the project area.
 6. Define appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services.
 7. Select indicators and establish thresholds.
- Outcome:** Describe the conditions to be achieved or maintained and how conditions will be tracked over time.

Steps:

8. Compare and document the differences between existing and desired conditions, and, for visitor use-related impacts, clarify the specific links to visitor use characteristics.
 9. Identify visitor use management strategies and actions to achieve desired conditions.
 10. Where necessary, identify visitor capacities and additional strategies to manage use levels within capacities.
 11. Develop a monitoring strategy.
- Outcome:** Identify strategies to manage visitor use to achieve or maintain desired conditions.

Steps:

12. Implement management actions.
 13. Conduct and document ongoing monitoring, and evaluate the effectiveness of management actions in achieving desired conditions.
 14. Adjust management actions if needed to achieve desired conditions, and document rationale.
- Outcome:** Implement management strategies and actions, and adjust based on monitoring and evaluation.

Want To Learn More, Get Involved, Or Have Questions?

Committee Member Contacts:

USFS

Appalachian Ranger District (NC)

- 828-689-9694 or appalachianrd@usda.gov
- Kylie Wilkinson or Jen Barnhart

Watauga Ranger District (TN)

- 423-735-1500
- Chad Ingle

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC)

- marquette@appalachian.org
- Marquette Crockett

Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club (TEHCC)

- <https://tehcc.org/other/contact-us/>

Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC)

- <https://appalachiantrail.org/our-work/about-us/contact-us/>