

# FSC US CONTROLLED WOOD REGIONAL MEETINGS

## CHEOAH BALD SALAMANDER



### FSC REGION Appalachian

**HCVS IN FSC** A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.<sup>1</sup>

**WHY ARE CHEOAH BALD SALAMANDERS CONSIDERED AN HCV?** The Cheoah Bald Salamander is considered an HCV because it is a rare species population with very limited distribution. The species was identified through an analysis of the NatureServe dataset, considering criteria including level of imperilment (both global and state scales), taxa (e.g., vertebrate species), forest habitat dependency, and recency of confirmed occurrences.

**SUMMARY OF CHEOAH BALD SALAMANDERS** The Cheoah Bald Salamander's range is not yet well defined but is believed to be limited a portion of the Appalachian Mountains at the very western extent of North Carolina within the elevational range of 975-1,524 meters, associated with the Cheoah Bald. The salamander's primary habitat is the mesic forests and the species may be common in areas with suitable habitat. It appears that much of the species' range may occur within the Nantahala National Forests and it is identified as a Federal Species of Concern. For more information, contact the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program or the Nantahala National Forest.

**IDENTIFIED THREATS TO CHEOAH BALD SALAMANDERS** These salamanders depend on forest & woodland habitats and it is believed that clearcut harvests can threaten local populations. Though some populations have been found in second growth forests, literature suggests it takes decades for the species to re-populate following timber harvests. Therefore, these kinds of forest disruption could have a significant effect on the species as a whole.

**WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ACHIEVE?** Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and the Cheoah Bald Salamander's range is one of these places - specifically, Graham and Swain Counties, NC. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites.



<sup>1</sup>Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values (<https://ic.fsc.org/en/what-is-fsc-certification/consultations/archive/hcv-common-guidance>)

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

**Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting [engage.fsc.us.org](https://engage.fsc.us.org) and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.**

## INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- [NatureServe Explorer](#)
- The Nantahala National Forest
- [The North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan](#)

