News From The Forest

Going Green for Earth Month

Turnbull Creek Educational State Forest (ESF) recently assisted with Cumberland County Schools’ Earth Month Celebration at Beaver Dam Elementary School. This event was part of the Go Green Initiative for Cumberland County Schools which helps bring sustainability education to students in the county. The event lasted for a week and featured various natural resource professionals visiting different schools daily. Turnbull Creek ESF had the honor of visiting Beaver Dam Elementary School and interacting with students from grades K-5. Students participated in an interactive game created by forest staff called “Forest Frenzy!”. They learned about the importance of resources within an ecosystem. Trees and wildlife share basic resources, while wildlife can also rely on trees for other resources such as food and shelter. Students were also introduced to the concept of competition and how that plays a role in forest ecosystems. Lastly, they were introduced to forest pests, specifically the southern pine beetle, and its potential to cause harm to an ecosystem in great numbers.

Thank you to Renee Jones-Carvalho, Director of the Go Green Initiative for Cumberland County Schools, for extending the invitation to Turnbull Creek ESF to participate in this wonderful event.

Visitor Hours
March 1–October 31
Monday: closed
Tuesday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday/Sunday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
November 1–end of February
Monday: Closed
Tuesday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday/Sunday: Closed
4803 Sweet Home Church Rd.
Elizabethtown, NC 28337
(910) 588-4161
Turnbullcreek-esf.ncfs@ncagr.gov
Visit all of North Carolina’s State Forest from the coast to the mountains. See NCFS website for more information, www.ncforestservice.gov

New Ranger In Town!

We have a new ranger at TCESF! Monique Mckoy started in October 2021 and is from Wilmington, NC. She’s a 2021 graduate of N.C. State university with a degree in fisheries and wildlife conservation biology. When asked what she is most looking forward to in her new role, she said “I’m looking forward to helping create exciting new programs here at TCESF and to start interacting and educating the community”.

Spring 2022
Forest Finds

Bugs Galore

As you all know, forests are home to different species of insects and at Turnbull Creek ESF, there is no shortage of them! Despite this, not all our bug friends are considered pests and for the most part, they’re a normal part of the forest. However, they can become pests if they begin destroying trees due to increased numbers or causing disease outbreaks. Managing for pests is an essential part of keeping our forest healthy. The N.C. Forest Service is fortunate to have personnel who specialize in providing technical guidance in maintaining healthy forests. Forest staff must remain vigilant in observing signs of insects starting to become pests. If you or someone you know has forested land and are concerned that a forest pest is present, reach out to your local NCFS county staff for assistance.

Turnbull Creek ESF has an ever-expanding insect collection, many of which have been found here at the forest. In addition, we offer a class on forest insects where we discuss the various bugs you may encounter and some ways to help identify them. Check out the unique insects pictured below that have been some of our recent sightings.

**Sculptured pine borer** *(Chalcophora angulicollis)*. Adults are dark brown or black in color with irregular sculpted markings.

**Horned Passalus Beetle** *(Odontotaenius disjunctus)*. They have a glossy black color and have a small horn on top of their heads.

**American Carrion Beetle** *(Necrophila americana)*. They belong to the family Silphidae and are mostly flat with an oval shaped body. The upper thorax is yellow and has small a black spot.

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**Left: Spring Turkey Hunts**

Harrison and his dad, Andrew, had a successful harvest during TCESF’s Turkey Hunt with two groups of youth and adult pairings.

**Right: Winter Mushroom**

The infamous Lion’s Mane is actually an edible mushroom. We look forward to seeing it again next year as it will come back on the same tree!
Forest Updates and Improvements

Turnbull Creek ESF recently renovated our wildlife observation deck and it’s now open for reservations! The observation deck provides a great space for birding or just relaxing and enjoying the beautiful scenery. Reservations for the observation deck as well as our picnic shelter are of no cost. Call the office today to reserve this awesome space!

Seedling Giveaway

North Carolina Arbor Day was March 18, and to celebrate Turnbull Creek ESF hosted a free seedling giveaway from March 18 through March 20. Bald cypress and loblolly pine seedlings were given away along with planting instructions and other goodies. Visitors were told of the history of Arbor Day and the importance of planting trees. Turnbull Creek ESF gave away over 200 seedlings!

Saturday Classes

Turnbull Creek ESF is now offering ranger-led classes every Saturday! Class time is 11:00 a.m. to noon and pre-registration is required as spaces are limited. Classes will provide the opportunity to receive credit towards North Carolina Environmental Education certification. Each Saturday will feature a unique class based on the following themes:

First Saturday — Guided Hike with a Ranger
Second Saturday — Naval Stores: Colonial North Carolina’s First Industry
Third Saturday — Forest Measurements 101: Tools of the Trade
Fourth Saturday — Fire Control 101
Fifth Saturday — The Art and History of Papermaking
**TCESF Newsletter**  
**Spring 2022**

**Wildlife Sightings**

**Baby Turtles**

Last year at Turnbull Creek ESF, a yellow bellied slider female laid eggs just at the edge of the forest’s driving path. Rangers happened to be passing by at the right time to witness the event and preserved the nest site. This species of turtle is common in eastern North Carolina. They typically lay their eggs in the spring and after about two to three months, the eggs hatch. The hatchlings will overwinter and stay in the nest until the following spring when they emerge and return to the boggy bottomland forest. Rangers were once again lucky to be at the right place and time when they found a hatchling not too far from the nest site (pictured below).

**Left: Resident Fox Squirrel**

Fox Squirrels are common in eastern North Carolina and consider longleaf pine forests to be their home. They come in many color patterns including black, gray, or a reddish color. Fox squirrel are large in size compared to other squirrel species in North Carolina. They are often mistaken for foxes due to their size and standing posture, hence the name “Fox Squirrel”.

It seems like a lifetime since we’ve shared any news, while many changes have occurred at our forest. Since our last newsletter, Turnbull Creek ESF has updated forest hours of operation and is now open all year round! We are hoping with the new schedule, even more visitors will be able to enjoy the forest. We’re excited to see what this season brings as rangers continue to work hard to create and provide new fun, interactive activities for our visitors. Be on the lookout for our newsletter as we hope to return to our quarterly forest updates!

**Upcoming Events**

- Turnbull Creek ESF will be at the Harmony Hall Homecoming in White Oak on May 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Stop by and say hello!
- Ranger-led Saturday classes, call for info!
- Wildlife observation deck and picnic shelter open for reservation
- Call us today to schedule a visit!

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