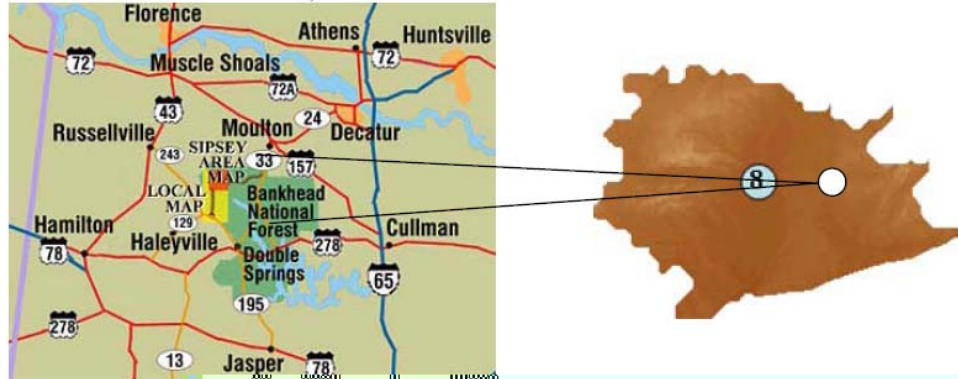


Bankhead National Forest (BNF)

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Location within Domain: 34.3018 N, 87.3734 W



History: The William B. Bankhead National Forest is located on the Southern Cumberland Plateau covering 180,581 acres in northwest Alabama. It was logged in the early part of the 1900s, but has now been restored to a mature forest. It was a refuge during the last glaciation and remains populated with eastern hemlock. Currently, the forest is managed for multiple uses, but contains the largest remaining tract of unfragmented deciduous forest in Alabama, including the 26,000 acre, Class 1, Sipsey Wilderness. The area is home to a diverse plant, land, and aquatic wildlife including game, endangered, threatened, and sensitive species; and has cultural and historical significance to residents and surrounding communities, including its spiritual significance to the Native American tribal members. During the past decade, the area has experienced Southern Pine Beetle infestations at epidemic levels. Peaking in the summer of 2000, an estimated 22,000 acres of pine forest (mostly loblolly pine) have been killed.

Key Characteristics: The area proposed for a tower is mostly vegetated with oak, hickory, long-leaf pine and loblolly pine. The forest lies in sandstone terrain, with vegetation similar to more northern and northwestern portions of the domain. Geological differences distinguish it from larger areas of the domain lying to the south and west in coastal plains sediments. We propose a tower location near the present NDAP site. This area is appropriate for several ecological research themes, including drought, warming, fire, invasive species, and pollution. To best serve the ecological research themes, the relocatable unit for this site should include at a minimum advanced met instruments, radiometric measurements, soil sensors, flux instrumentation, unless already on-site.

Existing Infrastructure: Proposed site in the vicinity of the USFS workstation will provide access to line power. All-weather forest service roads provide access. There exists significant amounts research data for the area through studies at the University of Alabama (A. K. Ward, G. M. Ward et al), Alabama A& M University (Teferi Tsegaye), USFS, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Long-term gaging records are available from a USGS benchmark watershed (Sipsey Fork at Grayson; 1929 to present) in which the site resides, the NADP site (10 y record), as well as monitoring for endangered darters and mussels.

Facilities: The proposed site is near a USFS work station adjacent to the Sipsey Wilderness, with access to all-weather forest service roads and line power. Forest headquarters are at Double Springs, AL approximately 15 miles to the south. The forest service maintains a recreation area approximately 10 mi SE (at the site of the USGS gaging station).