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Webinar to focus on improving forests without negative effects

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Forest ecologist Jess Riddle will present an April 7 webinar on forest improvement practices.

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The comparison of managed with unmanaged landscapes will show the impact of common forest management practices, according to the forest ecologist who will present the free webinar April 7 sponsored by the Friends of White's Woods.

Jess Riddle, who serves as a consultant with Georgia Forest Watch, an organization whose mission is to promote sustainable management that leads to naturally diverse and healthy forests and watersheds within the 867,510 acres of national forestlands in Georgia, will present the webinar

from 4 to 5 p.m.

According to Riddle, managers who are tasked with improving forests face additional complexity from conflicting user demands. Novel conditions, such as climate change, only increase the challenge. As a result, even the most well-intentioned attempts at forest management often fall well short of their ecological goals and produce undesired consequences.

Riddle will examine multiple aspects of forest management, using case studies drawn from National Forest projects that will illustrate the range of outcomes forest management can produce in the real world. To better understand the effects of management actions, such as timber harvests and prescribed fire, they will be compared to natural forest processes.

“Forests are complex,” Riddle said.

“Hundreds of thousands of species interact with each other and respond to disturbances, such as storms and droughts, which are themselves highly variable.”

Riddle earned his master of science degree from the SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry, where he studied climate influence on tree growth and how that influence varies depending on whether a tree is growing at the southern or northern edge of its range.

He has also investigated riparian forests along the Missouri and Sacramento Rivers. Riddle is the author of the 2018 edition of Georgia’s Mountain Treasures, an illustrated report showcasing 40 exquisite wild areas within the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests.

To register for the webinar, which is open to the public, please send an email to info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org.