

Decision Memo

Turkey Trail Single Track Motorized to ATV Conversion

Wasatch-Cache National Forest Logan Ranger District Cache County, Utah

Decision

I have decided to implement the Turkey Trail single track motorized to ATV conversion. This trail conversion will create a safer trail for those who use it with the intent of making the loop back to the Sinks road. The project will convert the 1.5 mile motorized single track Turkey Trail to an ATV trail, providing a loop for ATV users wanting to travel from the Peter Sinks area to the Little Bear ATV trail and back to the Sinks road. The Turkey Trail was originally designated as a motorized single track trail only because of one short section of the trail which was too steep and narrow, with a tight switch back, to safely maneuver on an ATV.

This project will use a small machine (SWECO trail machine) to lengthen, smooth, and widen the tight switchback to 60 inches wide and make it suitable for an ATV to ride safely. The area of disturbance would be approximately 1000 feet long. With the exception of the tight switchback, the trail can accommodate ATV use with no further ground disturbance. If possible, reconstruction work will be scheduled for the fall to minimize potential disturbance to any neo-tropical birds that may nest in the area.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measure included as part of the decision is intended to reduce or avoid environmental impacts from the proposed project.

1. The project will use best management practices for trail construction and maintenance (per the Trails Management Handbook, FSH 2309.18) for erosion control and resource protection.

Scoping and Public Involvement

The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping (October 30, 2007 through November 30, 2007). The project was included in the Winter 2008 Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA).

The District received 11 comment letters, 9 in support of this project and 2 against. The letters against expressed concerns about disturbances to soil, wildlife, watershed, and habitat, as well as contributing to increase of noise and pollution in the area.

Reason for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Action

Based on public input, interdisciplinary team review, past experience, and consideration of the resource conditions listed below, I have determined the effects of implementing this action will be of limited context and intensity and will result in little or no environmental effect to either the physical or biological components of the environment. As such, this is a decision that has been categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed action falls under Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 - Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook, Chapter 30, Section 31.2 Category 1 – Construction and Reconstruction of Trails. As described in the mitigation section above, all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts have been incorporated into the decision. The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action. There were no significant effects identified for the resource conditions listed below.

a. Federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species. The wildlife biologist, fisheries biologist, and botanist have determined there will be “no effect” to any threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat and “no impact” to any Forest Service sensitive species because there is no suitable habitat present, the species are not found here, and/or the scope of the project is limited and within a previously disturbed environment and therefore will have no measurable effect on any T,E,S species or critical habitat.

b. Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds. The project is not located within any flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds, and therefore, will have no effect on any of these features.

c. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas. The trail conversion project is not in a congressionally designated area.

d. Inventoried roadless areas. Although this project is within the Temple Peak roadless area, the reconstruction is on an existing trail and is limited in scope. Therefore, this project will not have any effect on roadless values or the roadless character of the area.

e. Research Natural Areas. The project is not in a Research Natural Area.

f. American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites. The Forest archaeologist has determined that no such religious or cultural sites will be significantly affected by this project.

g. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas. The Forest archaeologist has determined that no archaeological sites or historic properties or areas will be significantly affected by this project.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the Revised Forest Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed in conformance with forest plan standards and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidelines. The project is within the Cache Box Elder Management Area (Forest Plan, pages 4-128 to 4-139).

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

Pursuant to *Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck*, No. CIV F-03-6386 JKS (E.D. Cal., October 19, 2005), this decision (related to OHV routes and use) is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of the legal notice in the Logan Herald Journal. Appeals must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401; or by fax to 801-625-5277; or by email to: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Emailed appeals must be submitted in rich text (rtf) or Word (doc) and must include the project name in the subject line. Appeals may also be hand delivered to the above address, during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days following the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Jennefer Parker, District Ranger, 1500 East Highway 89, Logan, Utah 84321, (435-755-3620).

/s/Jennefer Parker

January 25, 2008

JENNEFER PARKER
District Ranger

Date

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