

Draft Proposed Management Actions for the Red River Gorge

The following list of management actions are currently under consideration by the U.S. Forest Service in effort to reduce the impacts of visitors using the Red River Gorge for recreation. Public, partner, and stakeholder input will be used to finalize the list of management actions and will then be reviewed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Decisions on these management actions are expected at the end of Summer 2021.

- I. Designated Campsites – Move all front-country and backcountry “dispersed” camping to a system of designated campsites. Implementation will occur over time, by area or zone, and will utilize an adaptive management framework to make site specific decisions. The designated campsite system will include group sites and will be managed under a reservation system. Designation of campsites in the Clifty Wilderness, if implemented, will be considered based on the results of a “Wilderness Minimum Requirements Decision Guide” analysis.

- II. Right-Sizing the Trail System – Examine trails that have been created by users and are not part of the US Forest Service-managed trail system to consider adding them into the system. Each trail will be considered individually over time under an adaptive management framework. Effort will focus on eliminating redundant and unnecessary trails, avoiding and minimizing resource conflicts, and providing sustainable access to the most popular destinations. Before trails are brought into the system, they will be brought up to agency trail standards and assigned “Trail Management Objectives” that prescribe maintenance levels and user types. Trails within the Clifty Wilderness will be considered for addition into the managed trail system based on the results of a “Wilderness Minimum Requirements Decision Guide.”

- III. Transportation, Parking, & Visitor Amenities – Establish resilient infrastructure that reduces impacts caused by user created parking, access, and use. Mitigate impacts to existing infrastructure, natural resources, and heritage resources by hardening and defining areas where public use can be promoted and sustained. Site-specific decisions will be made under an adaptive management framework and established design criteria. Specific actions include:
 - a. Reconstruct Chimney Top & Rock Bridge Roads
 - b. Construct & Designate Parking Areas Along Chimney Top, Rock Bridge, and Indian Creek Roads
 - c. Construct New Trailhead at Copperas Creek
 - d. Expand/Reconfigure Parking at Existing Parking Areas
 - e. New Restrooms at Camping/Parking/Access Areas
 - f. Establish Shuttle Bus Stops
 - g. Designate Park & Ride Areas
 - h. Establish Portal Kiosk Stations
 - i. Centralize Refuse Collection & Install Dumpster Pads

- IV. Forest Supervisor’s Orders, Regulations, and Commercial Use Permits – Establish new and update existing Forest Orders (regulations) that will support proposed management actions and facilitate sustainable visitor use:
 - a. Limit Camping to Designated Campsites
 - b. Enforce Trail Management Objectives & Stop Creation of Unauthorized Trails
 - c. Expand Day Use Only Restrictions
 - d. Limit Campfires to Designated Fire Rings
 - e. Extend and issue 5-year “Outfitter & Guide” permits to businesses with a proven track record of success and outstanding safety records (operations limited to areas outside of the Clifty Wilderness).