

FOREST-WIDE COLLABORATIVE TRAILS ASSESSMENT

CHATTAHOOCHEE-OCONEE
NATIONAL FOREST

CONASAUGA RANGER DISTRICT

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS



CONASAUGA RANGER DISTRICT

In the Conasauga Ranger District, 15 individual trails and just over 40 miles were assessed. This represents 15% of the total non-motorized trail in the District (300 miles). Specifically, trails assessed as part of this project include:

Conasauga Ranger District- Trails Assessed

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL NUMBER	TRAIL MILEAGE	MILEAGE ASSESSED	DESIGNED USE	TRAIL CLASS
Bear Creek	136	5.9	5.9	Bicycle	3
Emery Creek	97	6	2	Pedestrian	3
Horseshoe Bend	43	2.9	1	Pedestrian	2
Keown Falls	20	0.7	0.7	Pedestrian	4
Keown Falls Loop	20	0.8	0.8	Pedestrian	3
Mountaintown Creek	135	5.7	5.7	Pedestrian	3
Murrays Lake	182	0.8	0.8	Pedestrian	3
Panther Creek	116	3.1	1	Pedestrian	2
Pinhoti	3	70.4	15.9	Dependent on section	3
Songbird	138	1.4	1.4	Pedestrian	4
South Fork	140	2.7	2.7	Equestrian	3
Windy Gap	154	4.4	2.4	Bicycle	3

Education/Outreach Activities

In addition to the inventory and assessment work conducted on the district, the following contract activities took place:

Keown Falls Public Inventory & Assessment Workshop

Scott Linnenburger and Jeremy Wimpey hosted a public workshop on the Keown Falls trail and Keown Falls Loop trail. Approximately 25 attendees, including Conasauga Ranger District staff, gathered at the Keown Falls Trailhead. Keown Falls is a high quality scenic destination trail with a developed trail head and hiking only trail.

This workshop introduced the assessment team, and their inventory and assessment procedures to the CoTrails and USFS attendees. Attendees hiked the trails in groups and discussed several features and problems located along Keown Falls trail and Keown Falls Loop trail. Topics covered included visitor and water management, USFS trail classes and related design parameters. Trail conditions illustrated topics of importance related to the physical, social and managerial setting of the trails. Discussion with USFS and CoTrails attendees covered topics related to improving visitor experience and protecting natural resources with trail alignment and maintenance improvements. The workshop discussed how the character and desired trail class of the site influence management actions, the recommendations of the assessment team, and the types of visitors attracted to the Keown Falls experience.

Bear Creek Spur Demonstration Project

Bear Creek trail was chosen as the location for a field demonstration to exhibit trail maintenance activities that are recommended as a result of our assessment. The site was selected based on the needs of the trail, the educational opportunities present and the ability of the site to support a road to trail conversion workshop. The project with an educational “walk and talk” on lower Bear Creek, looking at advantages for road to trail conversions on both lower Bear Creek and sections of the Pinhoti. Workshop participants then transferred to the Spur section of Upper Bear Creek to observe a road to trail conversion taking place with Trail Dynamics staff running machines and participants performing finish work behind the machines. This workshop likely left the largest visible demonstration project of all the workshops. We completed over 500 feet of road to trail conversion and the before and after comparison was very notable and all participants were impressed with the results and believe that this could be a very valuable tool moving forward.



Physical Setting/Sustainability

Many of the trails included in this assessment are completely or in part located on existing forest management routes, including trails in backcountry, Roadless, and Wilderness settings. While expedient from a design and construction standpoint, these types of routes (i.e. old haul roads, railroad beds, fire breaks, etc.) were rarely created with long-term physical sustainability as a priority. Many of these routes were insloped (negative cross slope) or were not developed with effective water-shedding structures. Most are very linear on both horizontal and vertical axes and do not have a natural rolling contour, so effective water management is difficult to attain without substantial material movement and ongoing maintenance of that condition. As a result, the unnecessarily wide trail tread (typically a 6-10' corridor) is often degraded from water-related erosion. Future maintenance activities will require water management over this entire width, resulting in a trail corridor that has resource impact characteristics and maintenance needs more closely associated with a System Road.

Corridor management, including the clearing of downed trees, the removal of hazard trees, and the brushing of encroaching vegetation appear sporadically implemented, often not attaining the annual treatment dictated by Forest Service Trail Handbook Operations and Maintenance Considerations for Class 3 and 4 trails. Water management structures that have been created are more often log or rock water bars with sediment-filled, non-functioning drains rather than more durable and less maintenance-intensive proper rolling grade dips. Many trails have multiple bridges to cross small streams and wet areas, but still retain multiple unmanaged wet area crossings, minimizing the overall effectiveness of sedimentation control in the mountain stream systems.

Where trail sections have been routed or constructed for the purpose of recreation, often they have grades that are overly steep or very flat, continuing the water management problems associated with the adopted, wide historic routes. When steep, trail grades very often exceed the prescribed trail design parameters for the trail's designed use, and in most instances, these steep grades correspond with the areas of most apparent erosion. When flat, especially at the bottom of side drainages, sediment deposition into intermittent or perennial water flow is occurring, at minimum following storm events.

Notable model trail sections that do not conform to these trends, and thus have a much higher level of sustainability, include a few portions of the Pinhoti where the trail contours on the side slope.

Opportunities for improving the physical sustainability of Conasauga Ranger District trails abound in the potential for:

- 1. Road-to-trail conversions, especially on high-use or severely degraded routes**
- 2. Trail relocation at moderate, rolling grades to minimize impacts to aquatic and riparian environments**
- 3. Partnership development with groups interested in promoting conservation and forest ecology to bring Class 4 trails up to the prescribed maintenance and design standards and establishing improved and modern interpretive materials**
- 4. Partnership development to enhance stewardship along Wilderness trails, specifically in the promotion of Leave No Trace practices and the restoration of camping and user-created trails to provide improved resource protection.**

Social Setting/Sustainability

The quality of trail experiences in the Conasauga District is hindered, mostly due to the high percentage of adopted forest management routes as trails. These linear corridors simply do not connect visitors with the forest resources nearly as well as rolling contour, narrow corridors that also minimize resource impacts. Unfortunately, both public stakeholders and Forest Service personnel, accept these routes as positive experiences with no comparable, better experience provided.

Use conflict is a product of goal interference, whether that goal is exercise, serenity, resource appreciation, etc. Conflicts typically result from overcrowding combined with negative trail conditions. Flaws in trail design/construction result in situations where startling or collision are possible. Shortcutting and social spur trail development, where trail users are not expediently routed or trail conditions are difficult or deteriorated cause further resource damage and harm the aesthetic of the trail's setting. Insufficient public access and management at trailheads, camping areas, waterfalls, and fishing streams cause undo vegetation trampling and subsequent erosion.

Overcrowding and subsequent conflicts on the Conasauga Ranger District is likely a concern on short, high-quality destination trails and on shared-use trails. The short destination trails are generally not constructed or maintained to a Class 4 level or for the realized volume of traffic. A lack of adequate, highly accessible trail corridor and sound trail structures are resulting in resource damage and, in some instances, unnecessary hazards.

Shared-use trails in this assessment are not designed in such a way to accommodate the usage numbers currently or expected in the future, especially in this area that is popular with tourists who are drawn to the reservoirs and small towns that are dependent on a growing source of tourism for sustainable economies. Furthermore, most of the shared-use trails in the District have connectivity issues. Often, allowed uses between nearby trails do not allow for better connectivity and increased recreational quality and diversity. In the case of the Pinhoti, the lack of loop trails from many trailheads decreases recreational opportunity and the ability to better disperse use throughout the Forest trails.

Opportunities for improvement in this situation, outside of converting old roads to trails and more sustainable trail design and construction, include:

- 1. Enhanced shared-use trail system development with improved connectivity and loop opportunities**
- 2. Partnerships with local counties/municipalities to improve the sustainability, opportunities, and visitor access to Forest trails , especially areas near the I-75 corridor**



Managerial Setting/Sustainability

Conasauga Ranger District trails assessed in this project showed signs of very sporadic and often ineffective maintenance. Forest Service management of the trail corridor seemed to lack the necessary staff allotment to achieve the task on an annual basis, and volunteer-led work was minimal in quantity and low in quality. As with the social sustainability, the public has generally accepted the quality of the managerial setting without a better situation for comparison.

Trail management is a human resource-intensive process. However, without a high-intensity event such as a fire (wild or prescribed) or a large and consistent budget item, such as Forest System Road maintenance, it is difficult to assign the necessary resources to properly manage trails and recreation. A remedy to this situation is possible, but depends on significant and strategic public involvement. First, more volunteers need to become involved in managing the trails that provide so many societal benefits. This stretches scarce Forest Service resources and leads to a broader understanding and partnerships in sustainable land management. Second, citizens and smaller government entities must effectively lobby for the importance of sustainable recreation and demonstrate a commitment to partnership with resources that improve the situation. In both situations, collaborative partnerships are the only means to short- and long-term improvements in recreational and resource quality.

With population generally increasing across northern Georgia and southern Tennessee, it is likely that the Conasauga Ranger District trails and recreation facilities will see even greater visitation in future years. This will put additional strain on existing Forest Service resources and an already tenuously managed system of trails. Better managed trails will be a portion of the solution, but there will be the need for additional trails. The need will be greatest along the I-75 corridor for frontcountry, shared-use trail systems that can effectively manage high use without significant Forest-based facility development. Innovative management partnerships are very possible in these locations as the benefits to all parties are very apparent.

Opportunities for improved managerial sustainability are immediate with:

- 1. Formalized, strategic trail maintenance partnerships with parties interested in the improvement and highly involved in the use of specific trails or trail systems.**
- 2. Increased stakeholder outreach to non-federal government entities to solicit the support for and explain the economic value of enhanced and robust trail systems.**



TRAIL: BEAR CREEK

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Bear Creek
Trail Number	136
Miles Assessed	5.88
Beg. Location	FDR 241
End Location	FDR 241
Trail Class	2- Simple/Minor Dev.
Designed Use	Bike



Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	N	N	

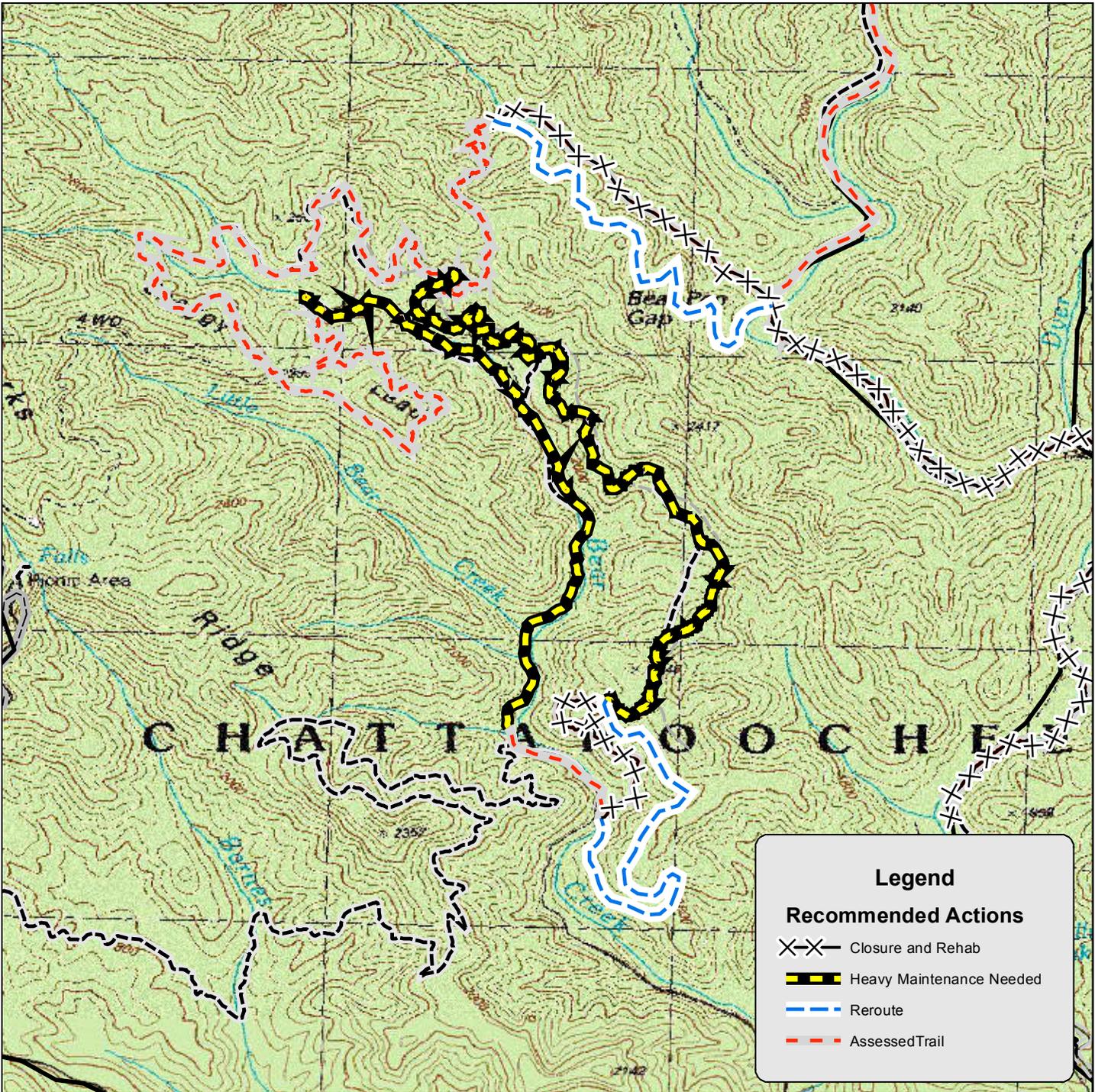
Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width	24" (from TMO) 36-48"	36-48"	Current active tread <48" over 90% of trail
Structure Width	18" min.	36" min.	
Tread Surface	Native, limited grading	Native, w/some on-site borrow	<50% of tread gravel surfaced, <90% on compacted, old road bed
Protrusions/Obstacles	<6"/12"	<3"/10"	
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	5-12/25/10-30	3-10/15/10-20	
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-8/10	3-8/8	
Clearing Height/Width/Shoulder	10'/4' (from TMO) 6-8'/3-4'	8'/5-6'	
Turn Radius	3-6'	4'-8'	

Recommendations

See recommendation maps on following pages

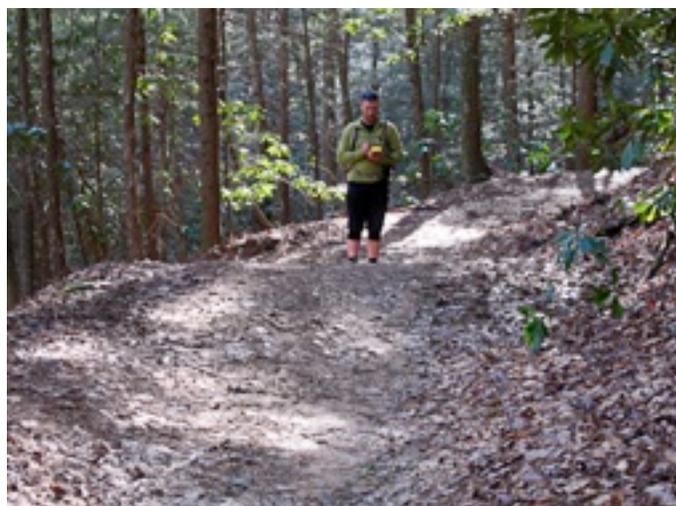
Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail is located on old road bed for <90% of length (up to 50% has previously been surfaced). Trail is in scenic, creekside backcountry location, but does not convey a backcountry experience. Trail could be Class 4 (has no attributes of Class 2), but road-to-trail conversion could bring it to Class 3.
Social Setting	Use volumes seem low for hiking, moderate for mountain biking. Does not provide a high quality experience for either use type relative to the setting. Use management and interpretation around Gennett Poplar is rather informal and not a substantial improvement to sustainability.
Managerial Setting	Very little water management over trail length and where it has occurred, has been “road style” maintenance with 12’-wide rolling grade dips.
Priorities	<p>High- Relocation eastern descent to TH</p> <p>High- Connectivity to Bear Creek Camping Area with descent above and streamside road-to-trail conversion downstream of TH</p> <p>Medium- Road-to-trail conversion of segments adjacent to Bear Creek, between TH and Pinhoti trail</p> <p>Medium- Construct steps to Gennett Poplar and restore area vegetation</p>



Representative Photographs:



Left: Gennett Poplar location provides mid-trail destination. Right: old road bed provides trail corridor. This requires more intensive water management maintenance extending the full width of the corridor



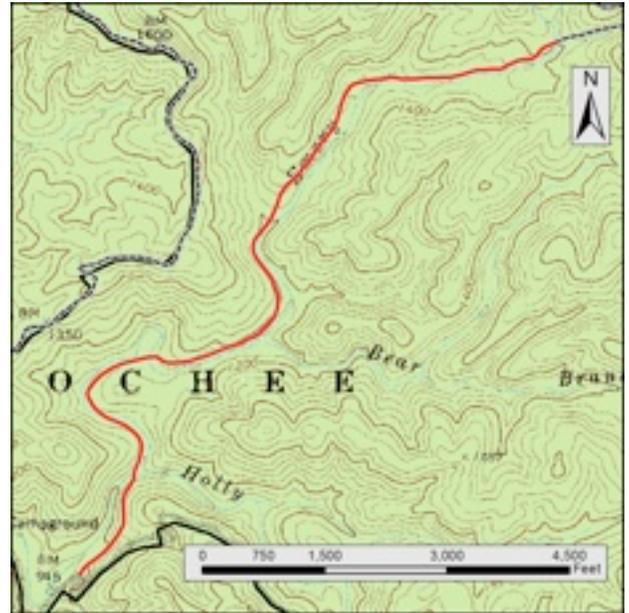
Above Left and Right: Trail is shared in part with FDR 68 and above switchback at Bear Creek has gravel surface and road-style dips with narrow drains, often not outsloped enough or with wide enough drains making them prone to filling.



Left: Very steep old road bed from ridge to Bear Creek crossing on southeast portion of trail has many locations where drainage is not provided and tread erosion and persistently wet conditions are present.

TRAIL: EMERY CREEK

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Emery Creek
Trail Number	97
Miles Assessed	3.88
Beg. Location	Holly Creek TH
End Location	Emery Falls
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Hike



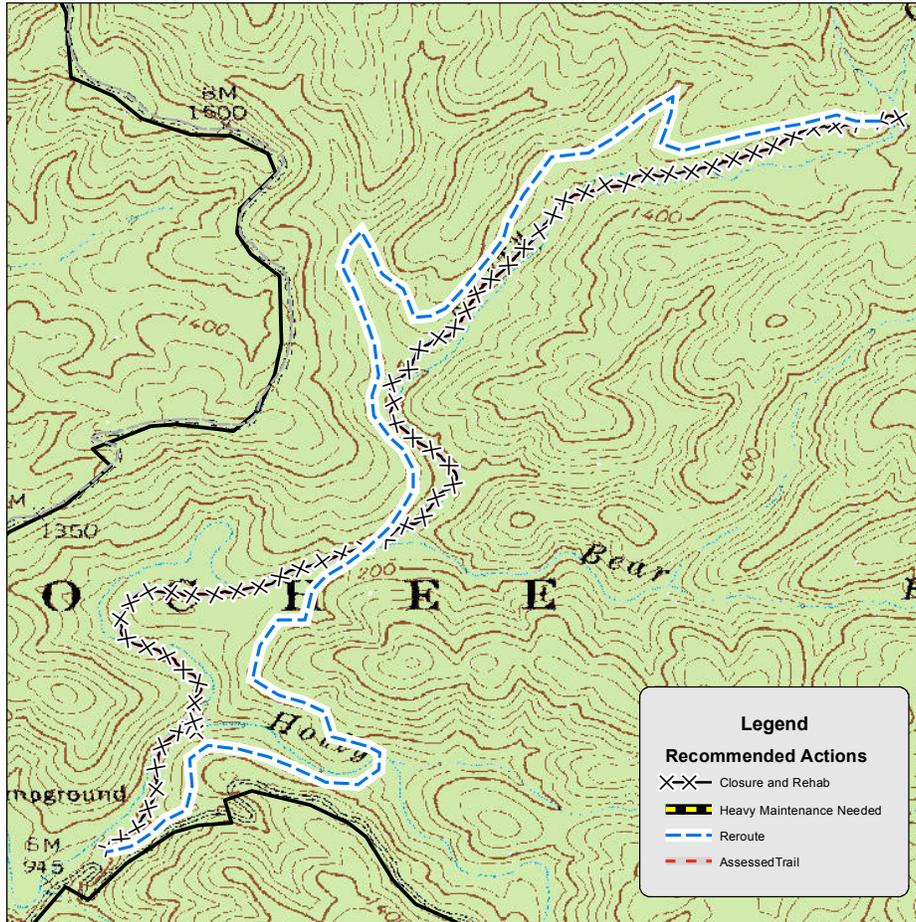
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	N	N	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width	24" (from TMO) 18-36"	18"	Current tread is 6-8' wide on old road bed
Structure Width	18" min	18"	No structures on any of the numerous creek crossings or where rock scrambles necessary
Tread Surface	Native, with some on-site borrow	Native, with on-site borrow	
Protrusions/Obstacles	<3"/10"	<6"/14"	Multiple rock scrambles with multiple 12"+ ledges and washed out trail with rock fields of similar size
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/25/10-20	5-18/35/20-30	Short pitches greater than 25% present, but majority of trail is less than 10% grade
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-10/15	5-20/25	
Clearing Height/Width/Shoulder	10'/4' (from TMO) 7-8/3-5	6-7'/2-4'	Old road bed corridor consistently 8' wide
Turn Radius	3'-6'	2'-3'	

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail is located on old road bed with a dozen creek or drainage crossings, some 24" deep in high water. Numerous washed out trail sections at stream crossings or where trail runs within 25' of creek bank. Creek crossings somewhat indistinct. Numerous fall-line spurs down to creek.
Social Setting	Trail has frontcountry feeling due to road bed width in many places, but rock scrambles, washed out sections, and challenging creek crossings provide a very different experience.
Managerial Setting	No trail signage at TH and damaged navigational signs along route. Sporadically blazed. No attempts of maintenance visible. Significant trash and littered campsites along route. Trail entrance is visual eyesore.
Priorities	<p>High- Signage improvements at TH and at intersections</p> <p>High- Reclassify as Trail Class 2</p> <p>Medium- Trail relocations to locations upslope of creek flow and to reduce the number of stream crossings</p> <p>Medium- Improve visual quality and connectivity of trail to TH parking lot</p>

Representative Photographs:



Above: Exposed culvert- erosion present in many locations due to stream diversion to trail during flow events

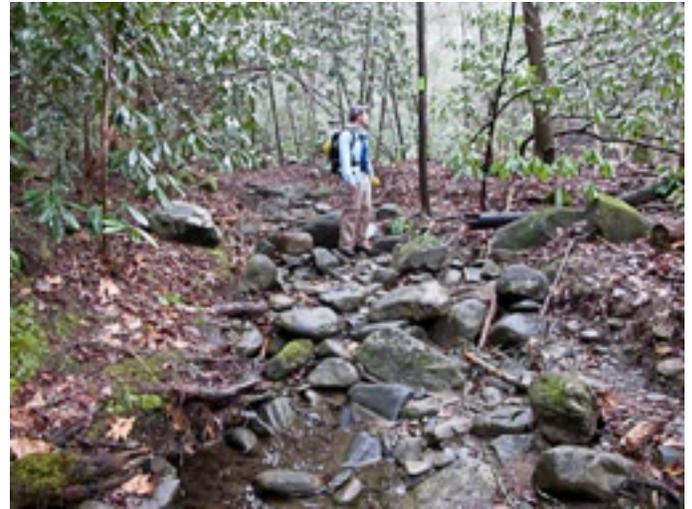
Right: First stream crossing from Trailhead, very deep

Below: Large rock obstacles near Trailhead





Above and Right: Stream diverted to trail during moderate flow, causing erosion, persistently wet trail conditions, and potential sedimentation to Emery Creek



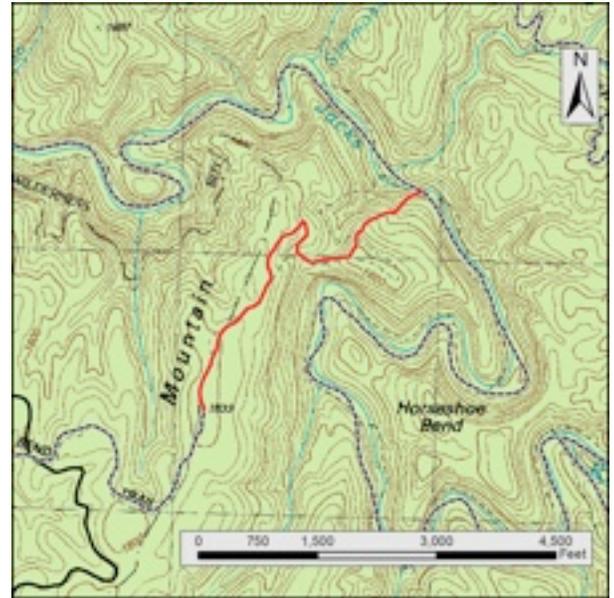
Above: Trail located in channel of intermittent side drainage

Right: Trail entrance at Trailhead parking area. Lack of signage and fencing make determination of trail location difficult. Fall line social trails to Creek in multiple



TRAIL: HORSESHOE BEND

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Horseshoe Bend
Trail Number	43
Miles Assessed	1.84
Beg. Location	Wilderness boundary
End Location	Jack's Creek
Trail Class	2- Simple/Minor Dev.
Designed Use	Pedestrian



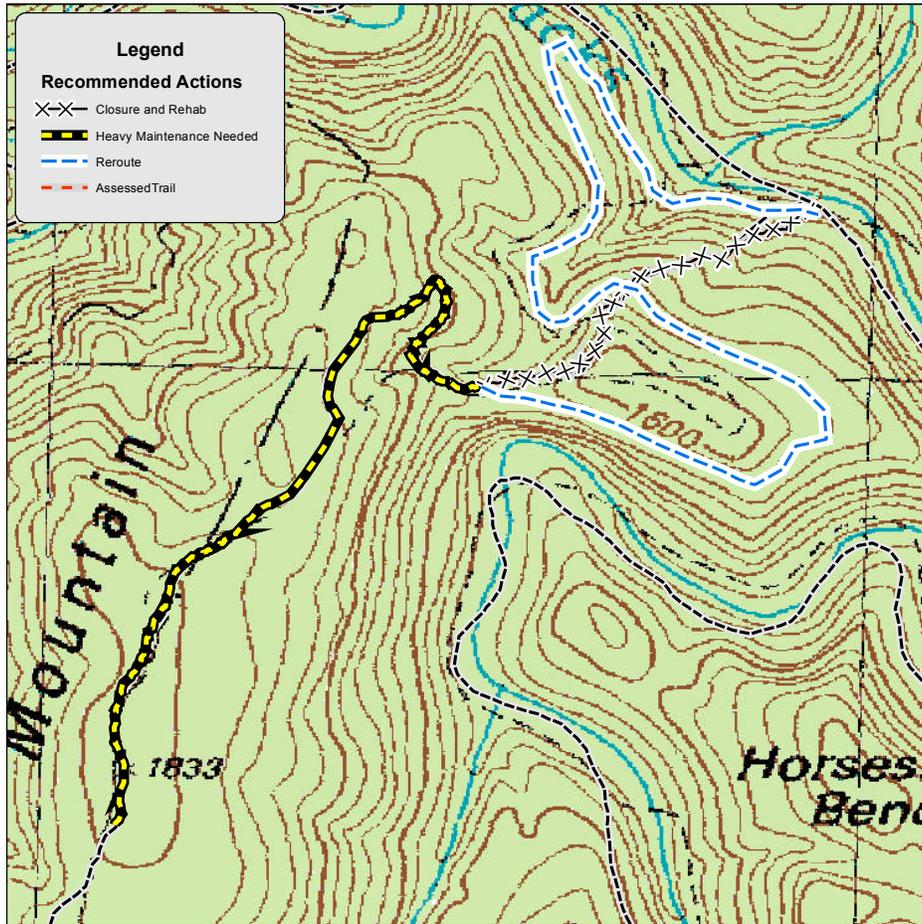
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	N	Y	N	Mechanized tools prohibited

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 6-18	6-18	Wide, old road bed to "No Horses" sign, 24" wide down to river
Structure Width (")	18 min.	18 min.	
Tread Surface	Native, limited grading	Native, limited grading	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<6/14	<6/14	
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	5-18/35/20-30	3-12/25/10-20	Fall line trail to river at 60% slope
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-20/25	5-10/15	
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/4 (from TMO) 6-7/2-4	6-7/2-4	
Turn Radius (')	2-3	2-3	

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Upper section on old road with few and non-functioning water mgt. structures, a few blow downs, and some erosion. Extreme grade from “No Horses” sign to river with feral pig damage and significant erosion where trail and side drainage share alignment.
Social Setting	Very low apparent horse use on trail and adherence to “No Horses” sign. Heavy use of campsite along river (significant litter, old bed frames, etc.) with lots of tree damage.
Managerial Setting	Earthen waterbars (not rolling grade dips) are poorly located and constructed. Horse regulatory signage consistency regarding routing needs to be assured at earlier trail junctions. Signage on trail segment in good condition.
Priorities	<p>High- Relocate lower section to old jeep road for sustainable access to campsite and to remove area of trail/stream/pig rooting.</p> <p>High- Trash clean up and restoration/management of campsite.</p> <p>Medium- Improve functionality of drainage maintenance to “No Horses” sign.</p>

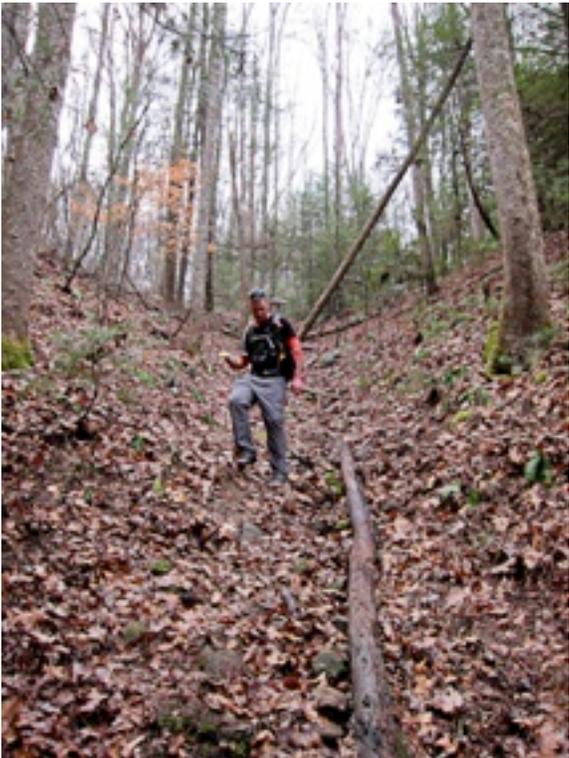
Representative Photographs:



Above Left and Right: The upper portion of the trail is on an old road bed. Water runs freely along the tread removing organic litter and soil.

Right: The Wilderness sign along Horseshoe Bend trail.

Above: The beach/campground at the bottom of Horseshoebend trail.



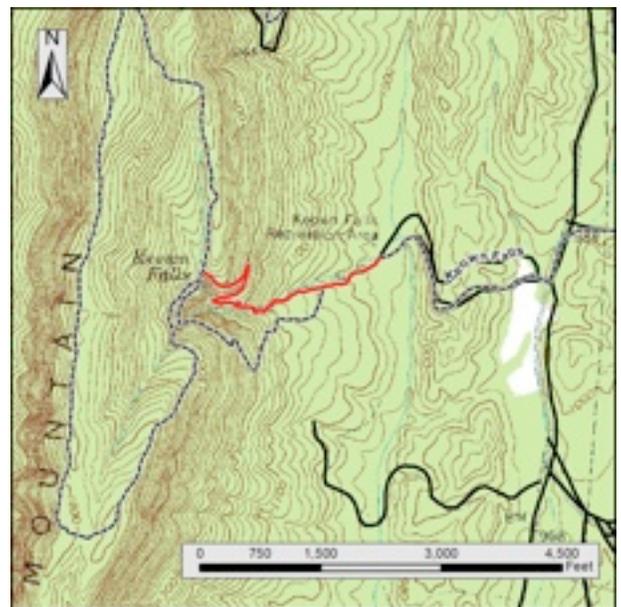
Left and Above: The lower portion of the trail is in the stream draw and at 60%+ grade

Right and Below: Bedframes at the campsite. Metal signage and wood pile at the campsite



TRAIL: KEOWN FALLS

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Keown Falls
Trail Number	20
Miles Assessed	0.72
Beg. Location	FDR 202 (Picnic Area Lot)
End Location	Keown Falls Overlook Deck
Trail Class	4- Highly Developed
Designed Use	Hike



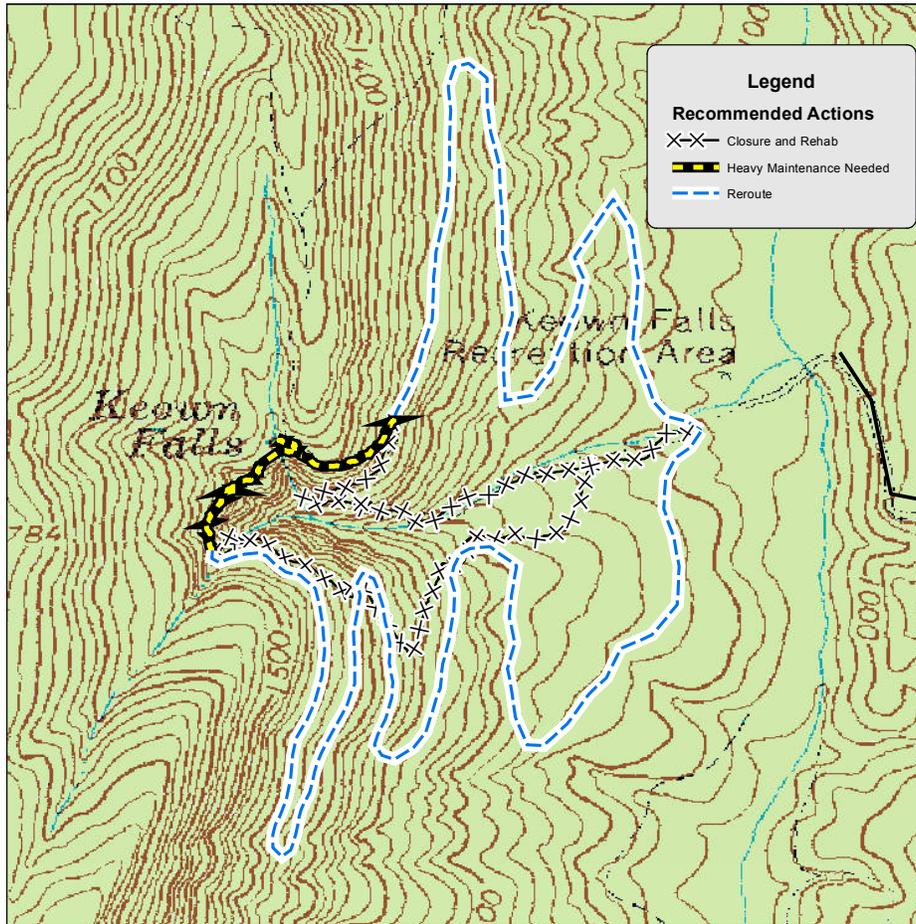
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	N	N	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 48-72	48	
Structure Width (")	36	36-48	Variable width structures (18-48") present in steps, handrails and observation platform. A few locations needing bridges are present
Tread Surface	Native, improved for minor rough	Native, improved for minor rough	Combination of surfacing, with gravel, concrete, and native stone additions
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/6	<3/6	Numerous large protrusions and obstacles >12", with notable 30+" step on switchback
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	2-10/15/5-20	2-10/15/5-20	Currently 15/20/40- generally too steep for this Trail Class, esp. in proximity to dev. rec. area
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	3-7/10	3-7/10	5/20. Some short areas of significant cross slope that has increased sloughing/hazard potential
Clearing Height/Width (')	8/4 (from TMO) 8-10/4-6	8/6	
Turn Radius (')	4-8	4-8	Very questionable switchback construction/maint.

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail has rock borders and <36" width on fall-line alignment out of parking area, becomes steep avg. grade with badly constructed/maintained water management and switchback structures. Uneven steps (width and height) with handrail leads to newly constructed overlook structure. A few wet crossings without bridges
Social Setting	High use and high value destination. Relatively short hike from developed picnic area. Trail is mostly too narrow for bidirectional traffic, especially where it is rock-bordered. Significant graffiti present at falls and switchback shortcutting is excessive. Additional and improved signage needed.
Managerial Setting	Numerous poor attempts to manage water off of trail and users on trail. Rock steps, switchbacks, benches in bad repair. Trail not managed anywhere near a Class 4 standard. Large, new overlook structure at top of somewhat hazardous stairs with bad ergonomics- uneven step height, width, and sometimes jagged step faces.
Priorities	<p>High- Improve signage</p> <p>High- Downgrade trail to Class 3</p> <p>High- Reconstruct trail to meet Class 3 design parameters with improved and widened tread, relocations to decrease grade, and more durable structures</p> <p>Medium- Improve steps to overlook</p> <p>Medium- Consider decommissioning loop portion of trail to best use resources</p>

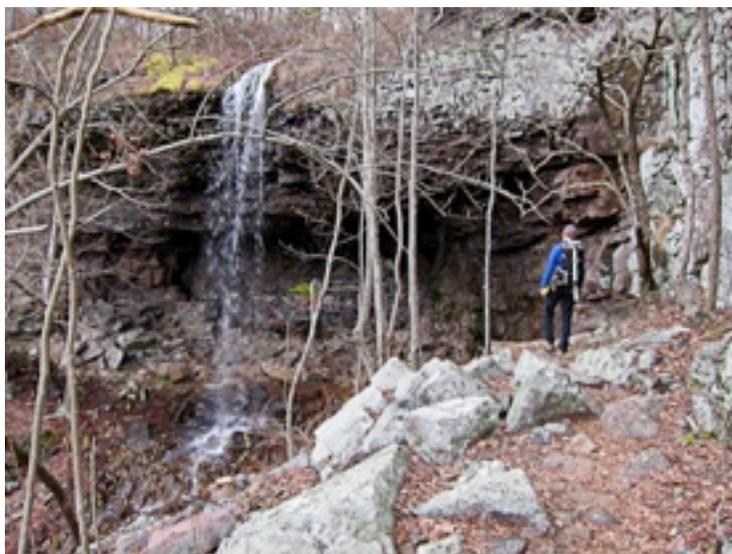
Representative Photographs:

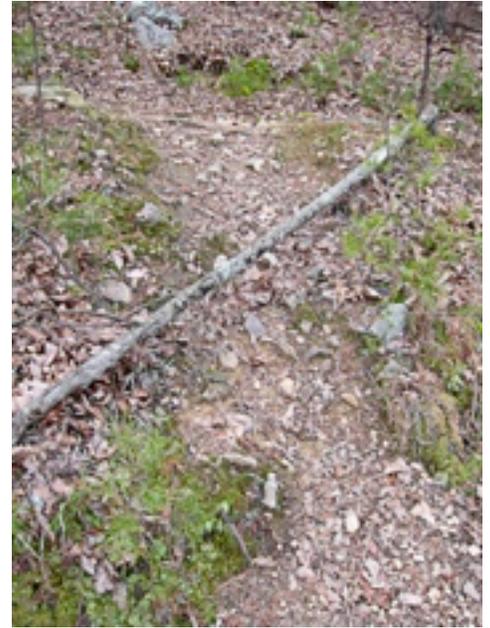


Above Left: Keown Falls trails starts with a narrow rock lined tread, making water management difficult.

Above Right: Steep grades take visitors up to the overlook from the stream valley.

Below: The top of Keown Falls Loop trail is not well marked, it passes below the falls and continues.





Clockwise from upper left: A tree in the middle of the rock lined trail. 2-way traffic challenging

Switchback issues on Keown Falls trail- shortcutting and erosion present on all turns.

Foundation "re-use" and a brand new viewing platform atop Keown Falls.

Steep and irregular steps meet visitors at the top of the trail.



TRAIL: MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Mountaintown Creek
Trail Number	135A
Miles Assessed	5.66
Beg. Location	FDR 64/Buddy Cove Gap
End Location	Private Prop. near Hills Lake
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Hiker/Pedestrian



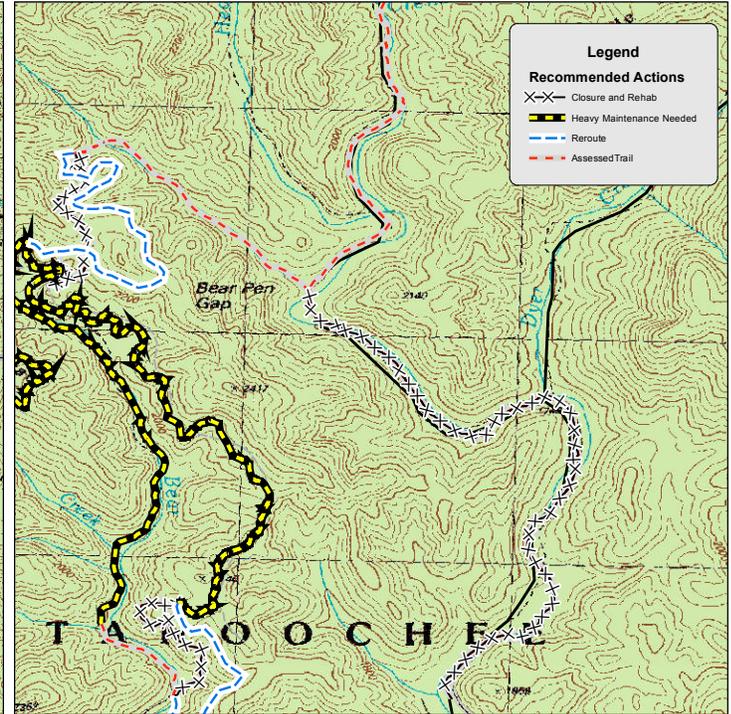
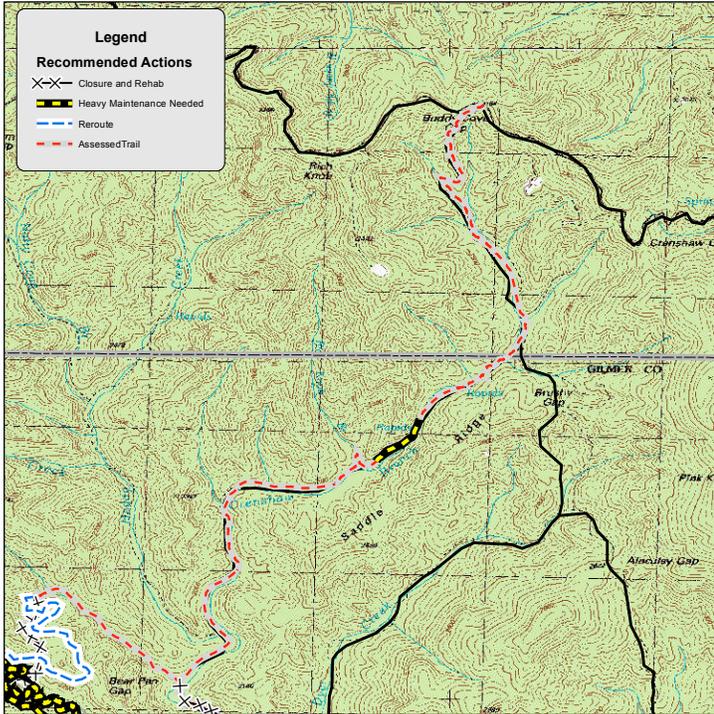
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	N	N	

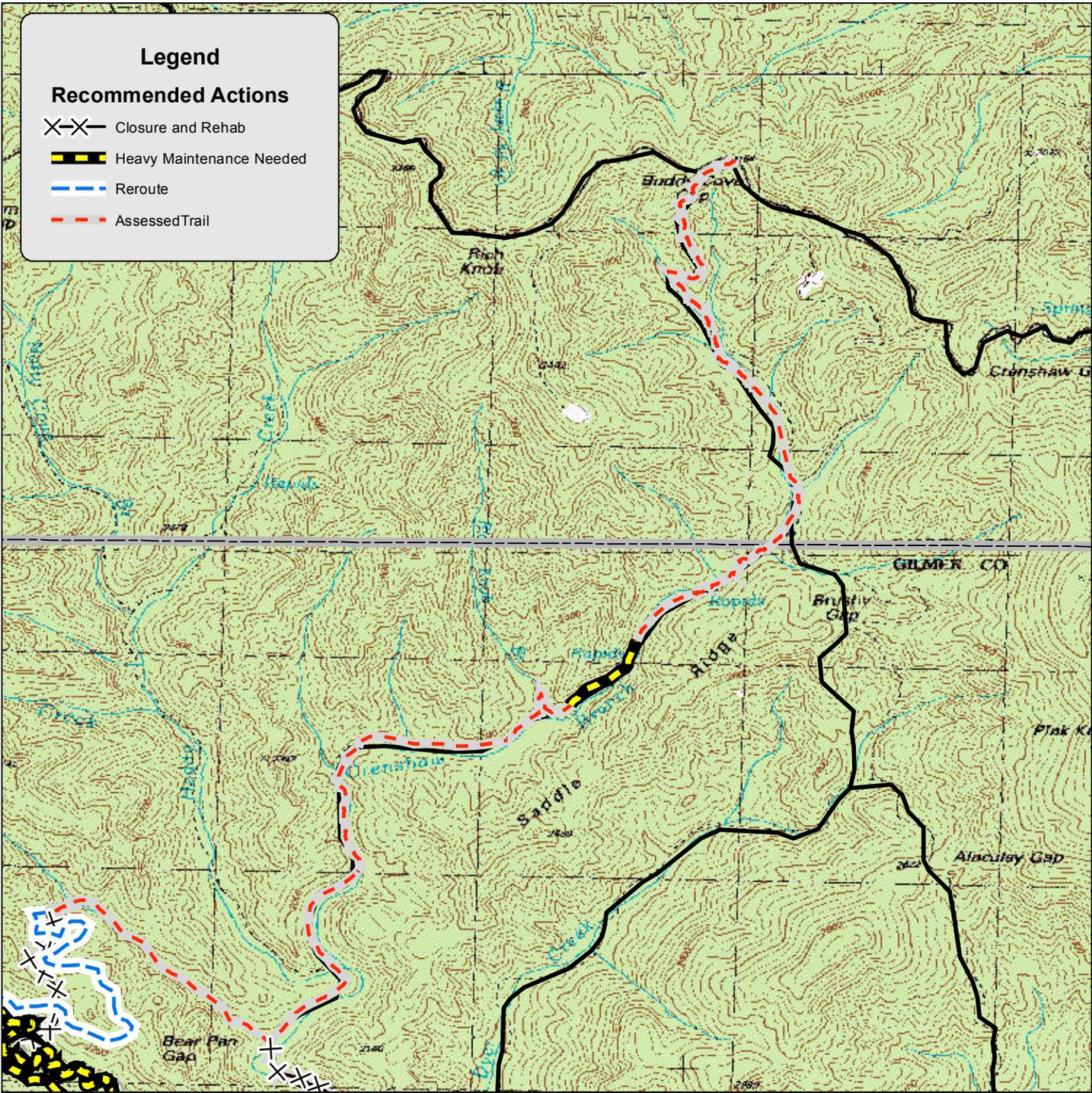
Design Parameter Recommendations:

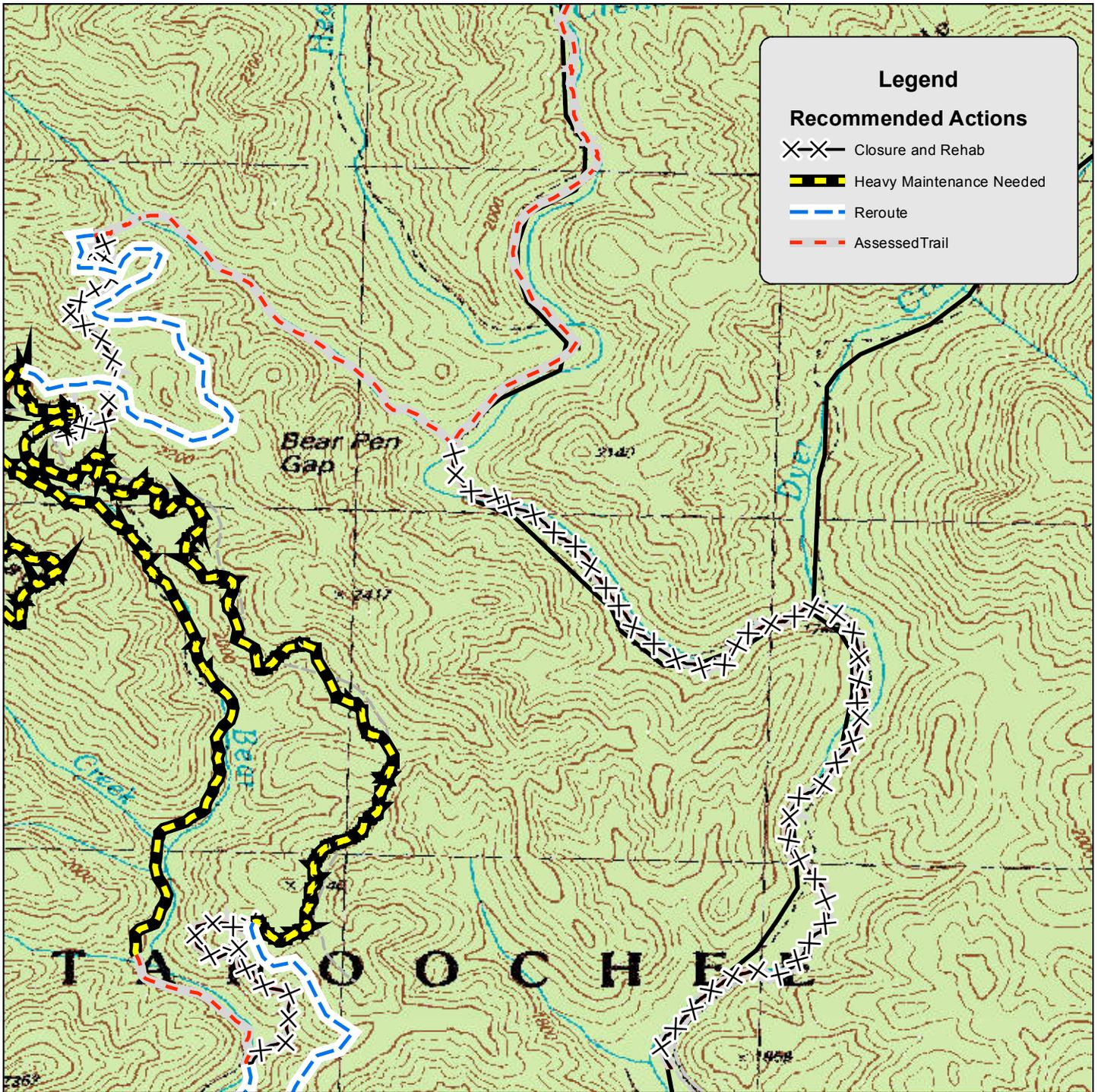
Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 18-36	24	Mostly old road with 10-15' width, no signs of narrow tread
Structure Width (")	18 min.	18	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Geocell and 1" clean stone imported for numerous hardened drainage crossings
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/10	<3/10	
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/25/10-20	3-12/25/<10	Steep grades have frequent water mgt and erosion mitigated
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-20	3-5/10	Water mgt difficult w/most of trail on old road bed that is entrenched
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/4	10/4	
Turn Radius (')	3-6	3-6	Very few turns exist and are road width radii

Recommendations

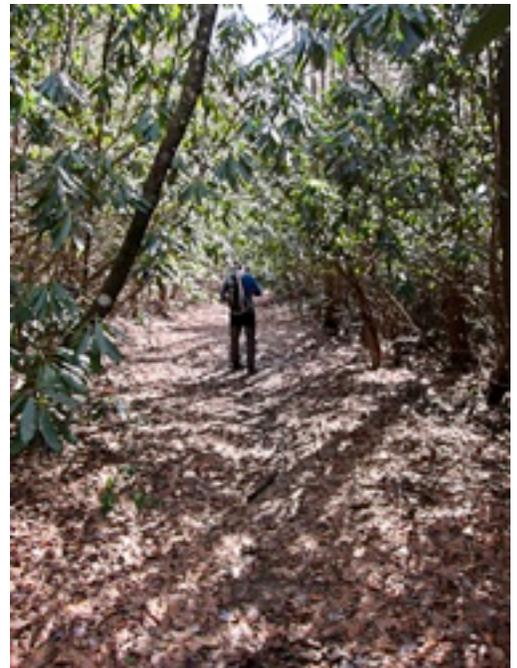


Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Entire route is on a somewhat entrenched old road bed or other similar-sized route (eg. skid trail). This inhibits natural drainage and results in the need for the significant and effective maintenance that has been completed on the upper section of trail. Numerous water crossings increase the potential for stream sedimentation, but hardening maintenance has been effective. Maintenance needed below falls.
Social Setting	Steep sections at top of trail have possibility of high speed differential between hikers and mountain bikers, but this is mitigated by long sight lines and aggressive water mgt. Apparent low hike and bike use by lack of defined, narrow tread, so remote setting and desire for solitude is not likely in jeopardy.
Managerial Setting	Signs of recent, effective maintenance on top section- needs to see similar actions over entire trail to further protect water quality. Lack of regulatory signage for bike use defining private property and Bear Creek lack of connectivity.
Priorities	<p>High- Decommission trail from Pinhoti junction stream crossing to private property</p> <p>High- Water management maintenance activities from falls down to Pinhoti junction</p> <p>High- Improved navigation/regulatory signage, explanation of bike routing, and opening of Pinhoti section (with relocation) for bike use</p> <p>Medium- Road-to-trail conversion (grading, active corridor and streambank restoration) to narrow corridor, improve user experience, decrease maintenance</p>





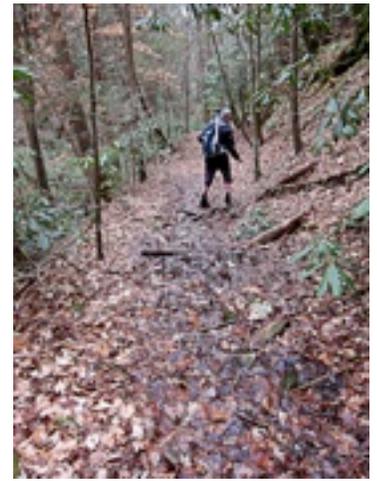
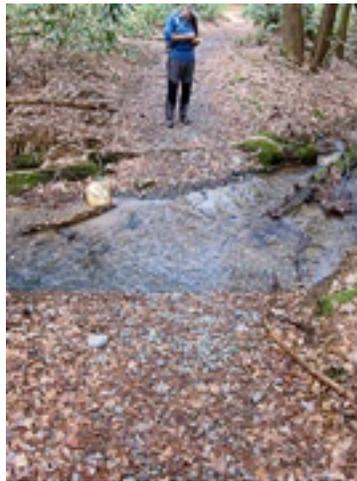
Representative Photographs:



Top Left and Right: Mountaintown Creek trail is located almost entirely on an old road bed.

Above Left: The upper section has steep grades, yet ample water management and the tread is in good shape.

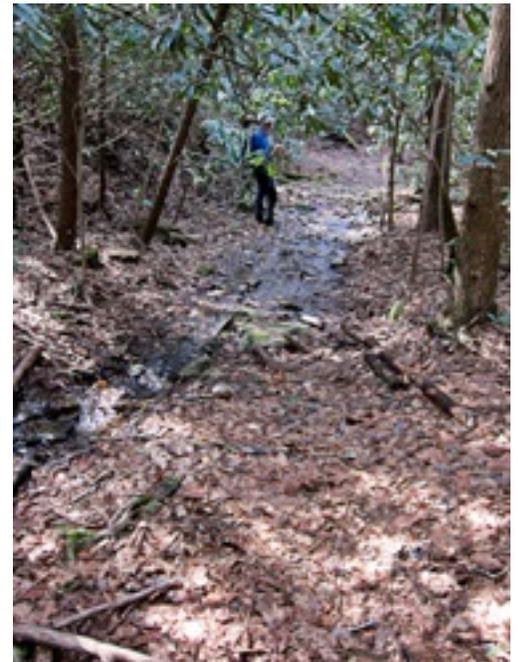
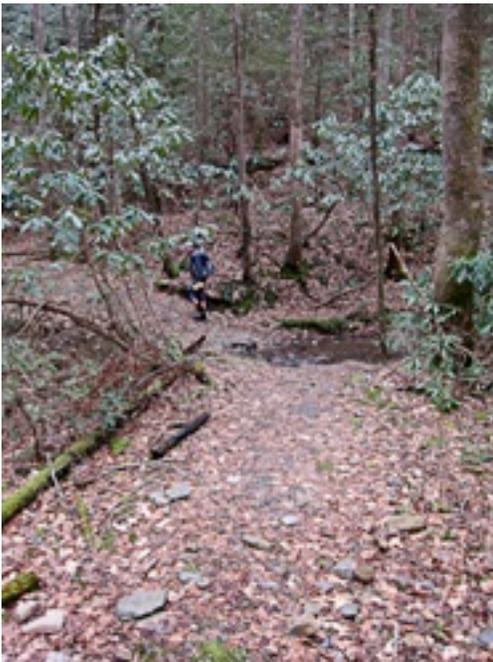
Above Right: After the initial steep descent, the trail parallels the creek. Leadoff ditches have riprap and sediment traps to capture any loose sediments during rain events



Above: Recent maintenance has provided hardened crossings at most stream fords.

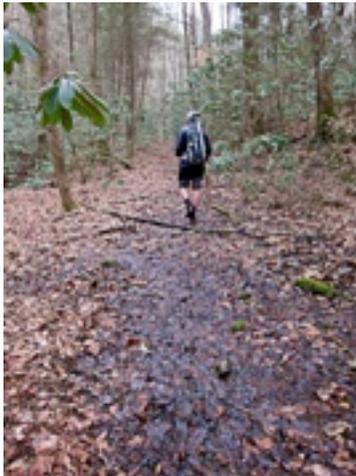
Left and Right: The trails shows little evidence of use. Side drainages complicate water management in the gorge section of the trail.

Below: Stream crossing locations best at riffle areas where water volume and power is dispersed





Below the junction with Pinhoti trail, trail conditions drop off rapidly. Crossings are wider on this section and lack armored approaches. Muddy conditions are present and downed trees are prevalent across the trail corridor, and active sediment deposition in the creek was observed



TRAIL: MURRAY'S LAKE

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Murray's Lake
Trail Number	182
Miles Assessed	0.82
Beg. Location	FDR 17-B
End Location	FDR 17-B
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Hike



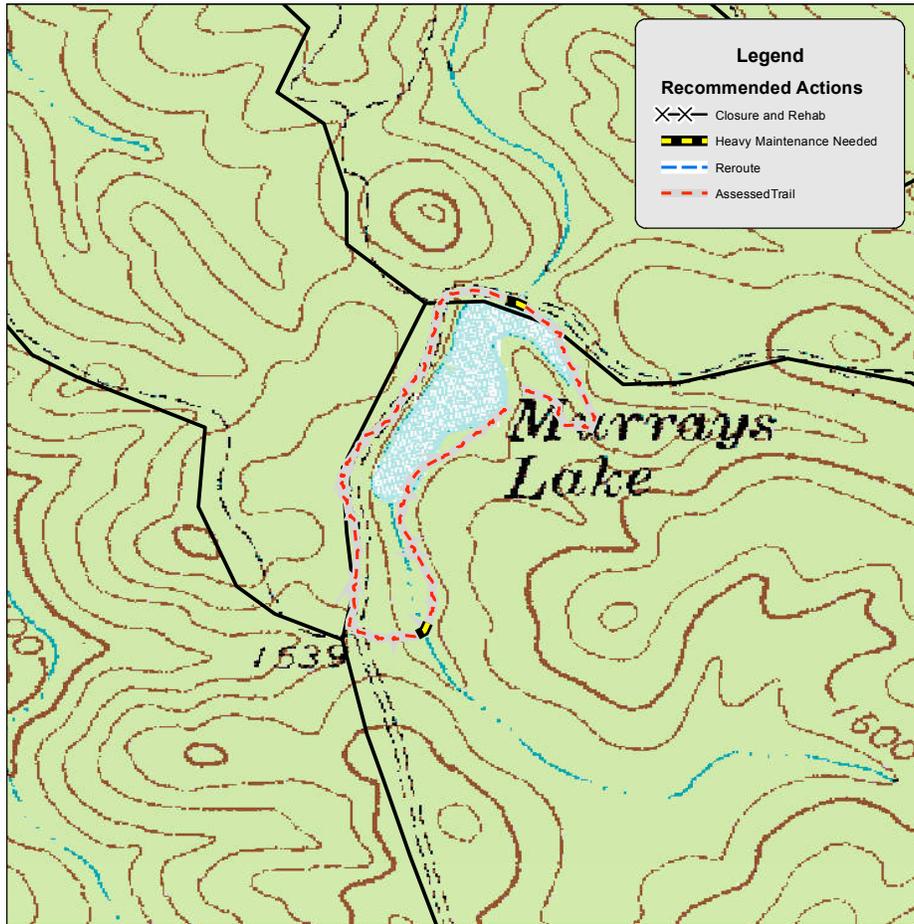
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	N	N	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24" (from TMO) 36-60	36	Old road bed on west side of lake
Structure Width (")	18 min.	36 min.	First bridge (counterclockwise from TH) needs removal/repair, remainder of structures require inspection
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/10	<3/8	
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/25/10-20	2-10/15/5-10	
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-10/15	3-7/10	
Clearing Height/Width (')	8/4 (from TMO) 7-8/3-5	8/4	
Turn Radius (')	3-6	3-6	

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail forms loop around Murray's Lake. Numerous blow downs, three low-quality and degrading bridges, and at least four social trails to lakeshore.
Social Setting	Trail seems to have little use other than low to moderate fishing access. Subsequently there is little chance of social conflict between uses.
Managerial Setting	No signs of recent maintenance activity. Signage is missing or in poor condition, significant trash at Trailhead/Campsite parking area, many blow downs and degraded wooden structures pose risk management hazard.
Priorities	<p>High- Institute formal maintenance program to address sign, bridge, and corridor issues.</p> <p>Medium- Consider down grading the trail to Class 2 if specifications and maintenance for Class 3 are not feasible.</p>

Representative Photographs:



Above Left: Trailhead kiosk

Above and Left: Deteriorating bridge conditions and lack of sufficient engineering



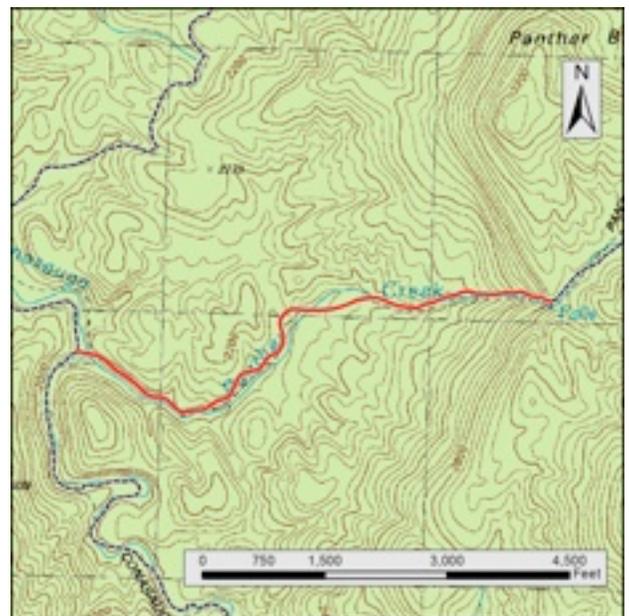


Additional bridges along the trail route that are in need of repair/removal and higher level of engineering. Trail seems to see little use, with many downed trees across the trail corridor and hazard trees capable of falling in the near future



TRAIL: PANTHER CREEK

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Panther Creek
Trail Number	116
Miles Assessed	1.75
Beg. Location	Waterfall
End Location	Junction, Consauga Trail
Trail Class	2- Simple/Minor Dev.
Designed Use	Hike



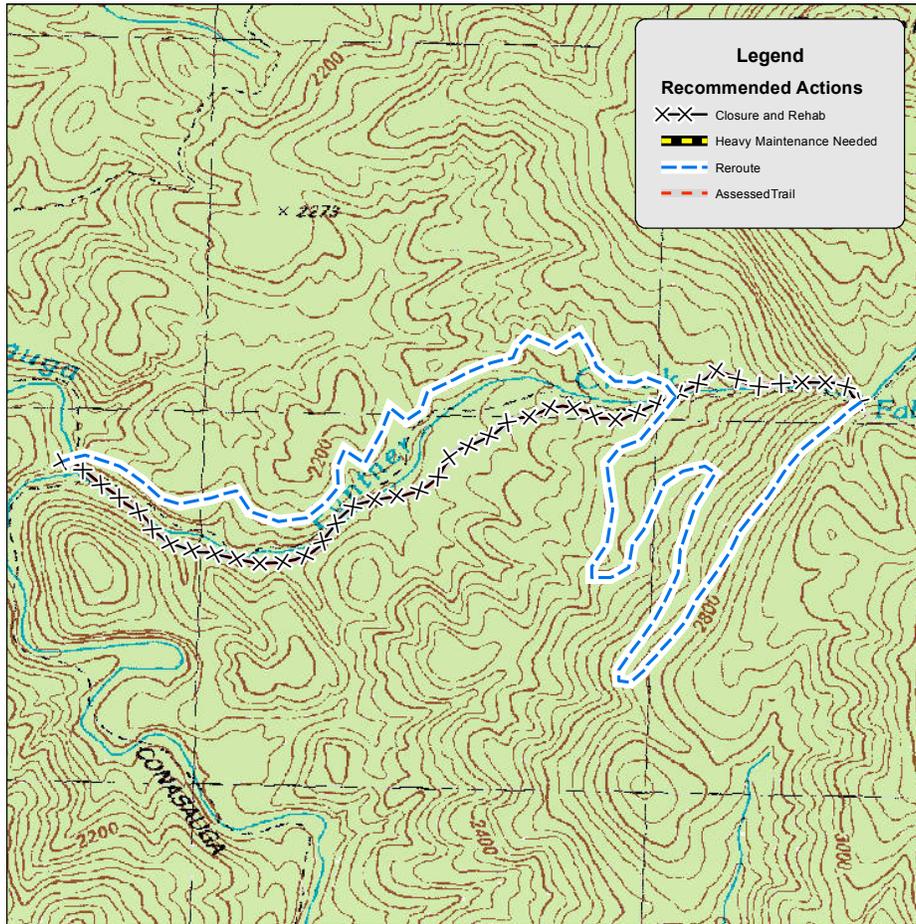
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	N	N	N	Mechanized tools prohibited

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 6-18	18	0-50" currently. Faint tread at best at Falls, then trail follows old road bed
Structure Width (")	18	18	
Tread Surface	Native, limited grading	Native, limited grading	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<6/14	<6/14	Much larger obstacles currently exist, some up to 40" in scree field area
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	5-18/35/20-30	5-18/25/10-20	Extremely steep , 30+%, at falls, then flat on roads at valley bottom
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-20/25	5-10/15	
Clearing Height/Width (')	8/4 (from TMO) 6-7/2-4	7/4	
Turn Radius (')	2-3	2-3	

Recommendations



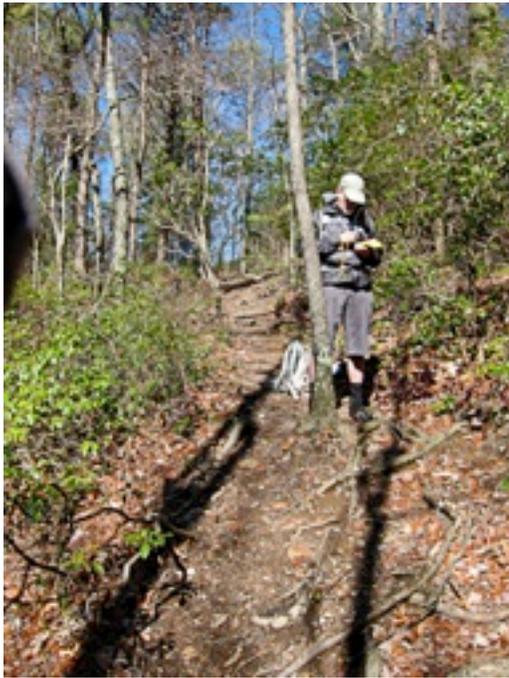
Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Steep rock scramble near falls followed by numerous creek crossings on old road beds. Approximately 50% of trail on old road.
Social Setting	Large amount of day use above falls with significant decrease below falls leaves trail difficult to follow. Numerous social trails exist to the creek and campsites in the valley above the falls.
Managerial Setting	Corridor mostly clear, but very little signage or blazes to assist in navigation. No structures or water management apparent. Signing/blazing may be necessary for resource protection due to very high use, even though Wilderness setting
Priorities	<p>Medium- Relocation from falls to valley floor to eliminate wet, rocky scramble and fit within design parameters.</p> <p>Medium- Relocation of trail off of road beds to north side of creek to eliminate numerous water crossings and enhance wilderness character</p> <p>Low- If improvements are not feasible, consider down grading trail to Class 1</p>

Representative Photographs:



Panther Creek is located in the Cohutta Wilderness





Above Left: The upper section of Panther Creek trail is steep and narrow.

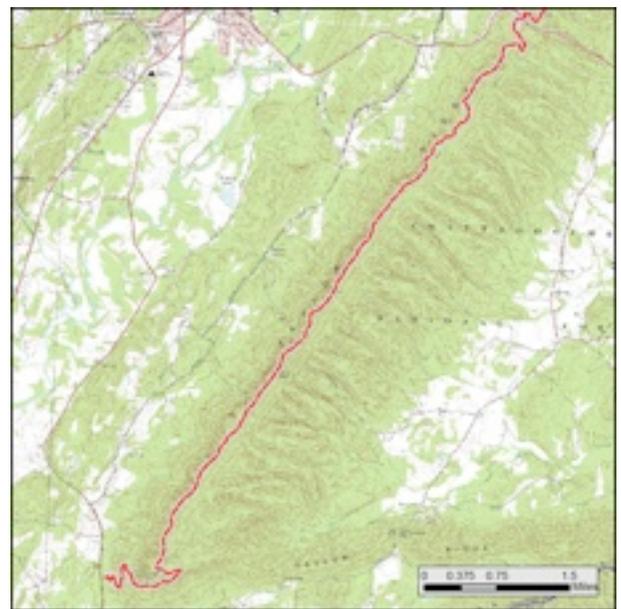
Above Right: Just above the falls, the trail splits as it passes through a series of large campsites.

Below and Right: Below the falls, the trail steepens and becomes a rock scramble



TRAIL: PINHOTI

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Pinhoti
Trail Number	3
Miles Assessed	9.4
Beg. Location	High Point Trailhead
End Location	HWY 27/Mack White Gap
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Pack & Saddle



Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	Y	N	

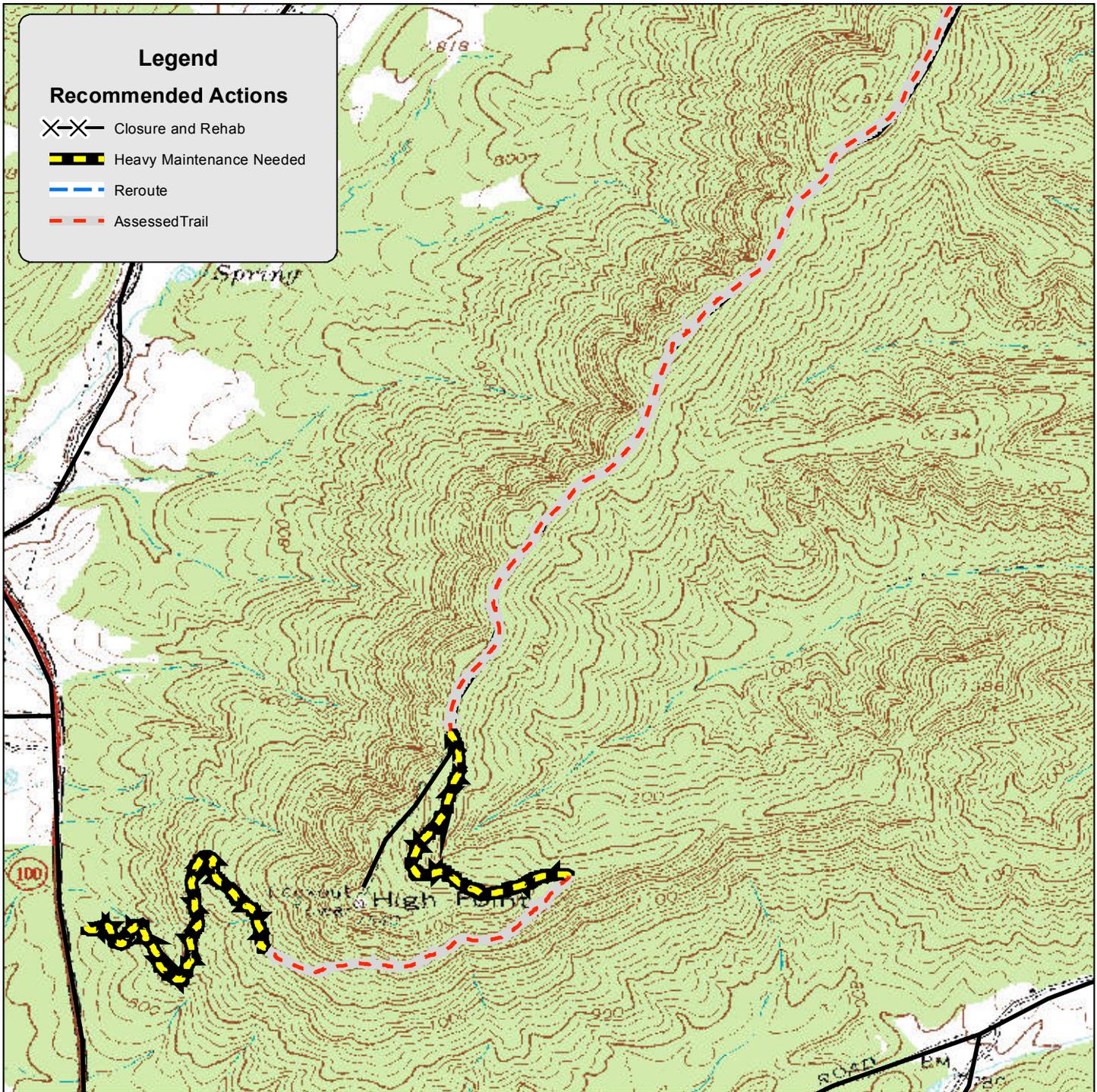
Design Parameter Recommendations:

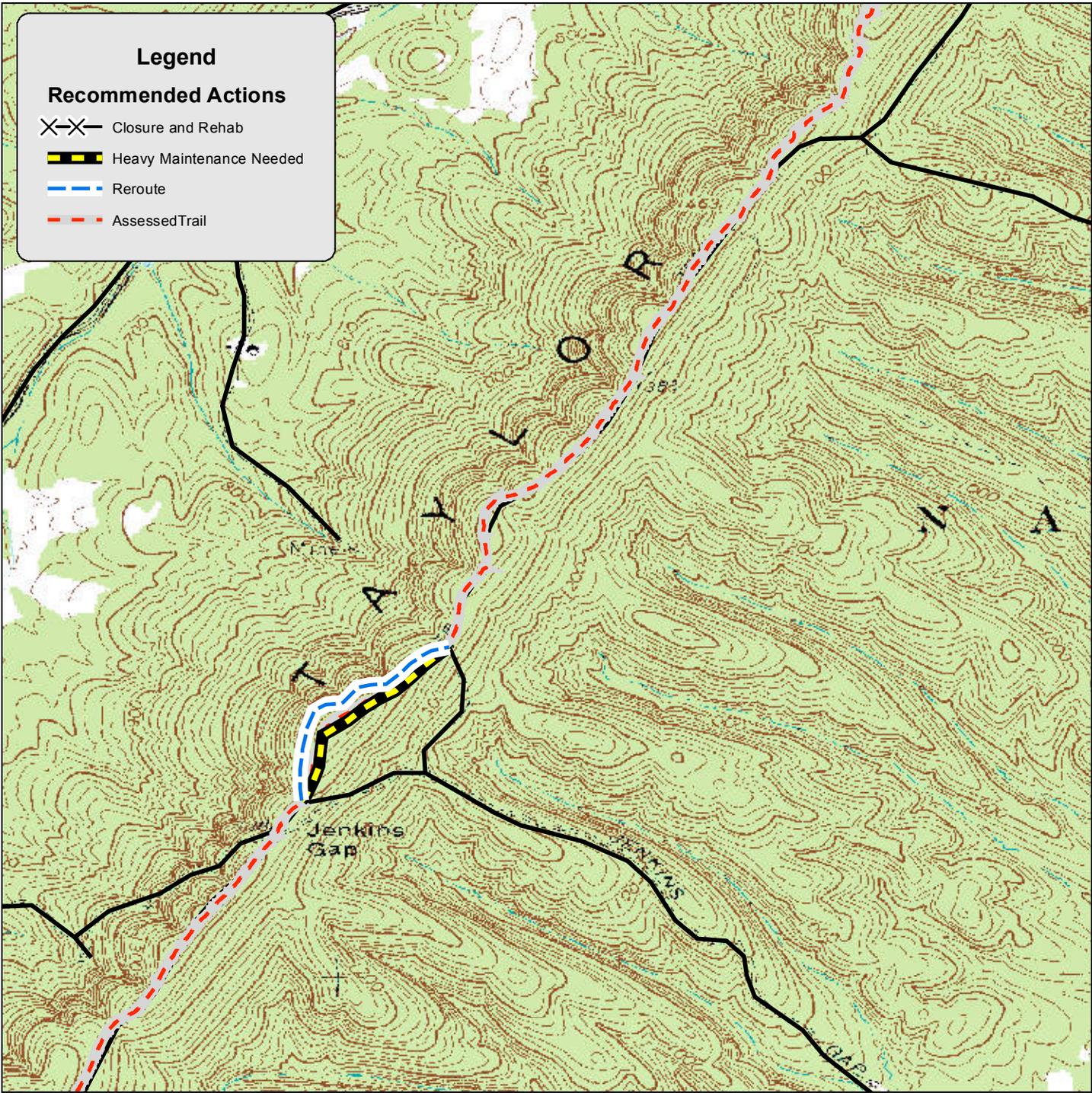
Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 60-84	60	Road portions are 8' to 20' wide
Structure Width (")	60/84 bridges 36 other structures	36	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Portions of road are gravel surfaced
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/6	<3/6	Variable, but generally <6"
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/20/5-15	2-10/15/5-10	Many gradients are steeper than 12% w/max. grades >25%.
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	3-5/8	0-5/5	Numerous areas with cross slopes >15%
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/4 (from TMO) 10/6-8	10/6-8	
Turn Radius (')	5-8	5-8	

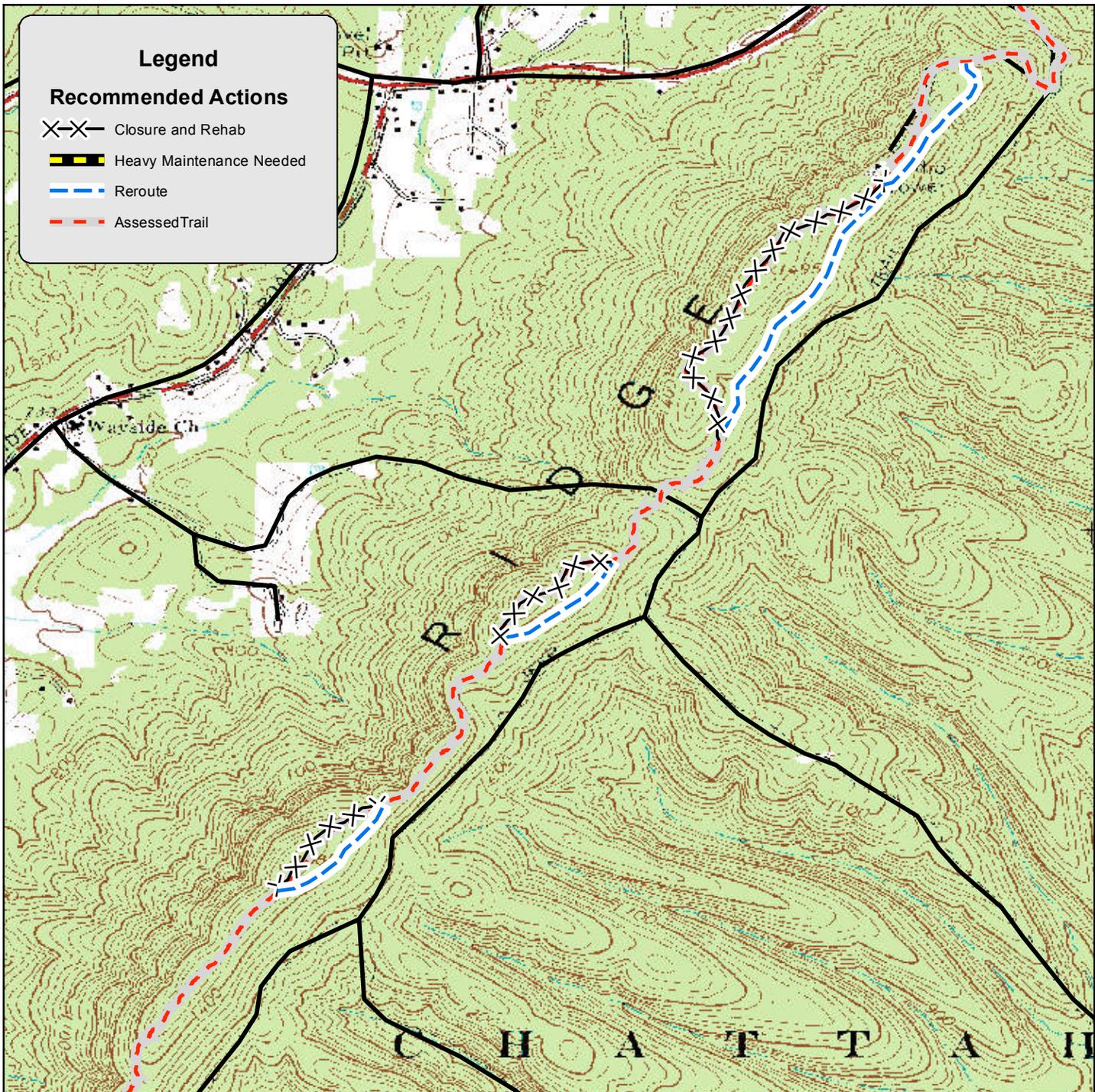
Recommendations

See following pages for recommendation maps for this section

Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail ascends from High Point Trailhead to Taylor Ridge and the Lookout Tower access road. Ascending leg sometimes exceeds TMO and recommended grades, switchbacks are not well located, and water mgt structures generally require maintenance as drains have filled. Trail continues on wide road past Jenkins Gap where it narrows to 36-48” on old road beds, with water management improvement needs. Northern section consists of 12-18” ridgeline trail in good condition, save for steep pitches where width increases and water mgt is needed.
Social Setting	Setting is relatively remote on ridgeline with access to Sloppy Floyd State Park, where evidence of ATV use at park boundary/Jenkins Gap is present. Equestrian use seems low. Trail tread varies widely from 20’ wide road to 12” wide singletrack
Managerial Setting	Water management features need maintenance and regrading. Few Pinhoti blazes are present, nor is directional signage at trail junctions.
Priorities	<p>Medium- Improved shaping and maintenance recurrence intervals on water management features.</p> <p>Medium- Relocation of switchbacks and steep gradients to improve sustainability.</p> <p>Medium- Consider reconstruction of northern portion to meet width needs for two-way horse traffic.</p> <p>Medium- Consider loop options to connect with Trailheads and Sloppy Floyd State Park.</p>

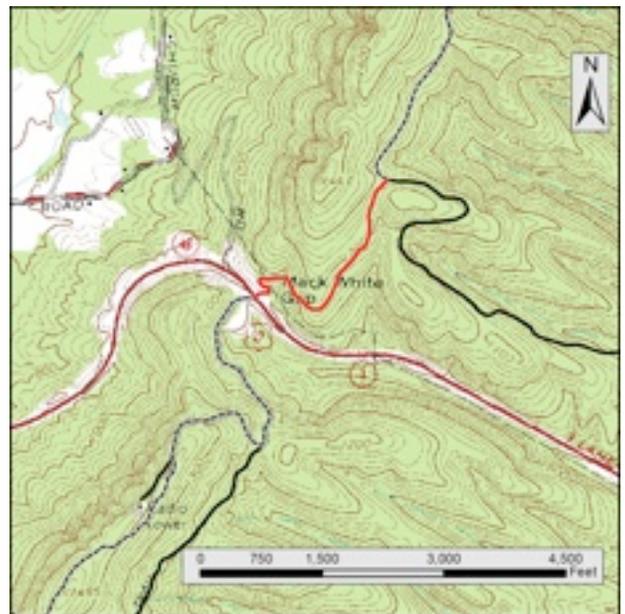






TRAIL: PINHOTI

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Pinhoti
Trail Number	3
Miles Assessed	0.6
Beg. Location	HWY 27/Mack White Gap
End Location	Taylor Ridge Rd
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Pack & Saddle



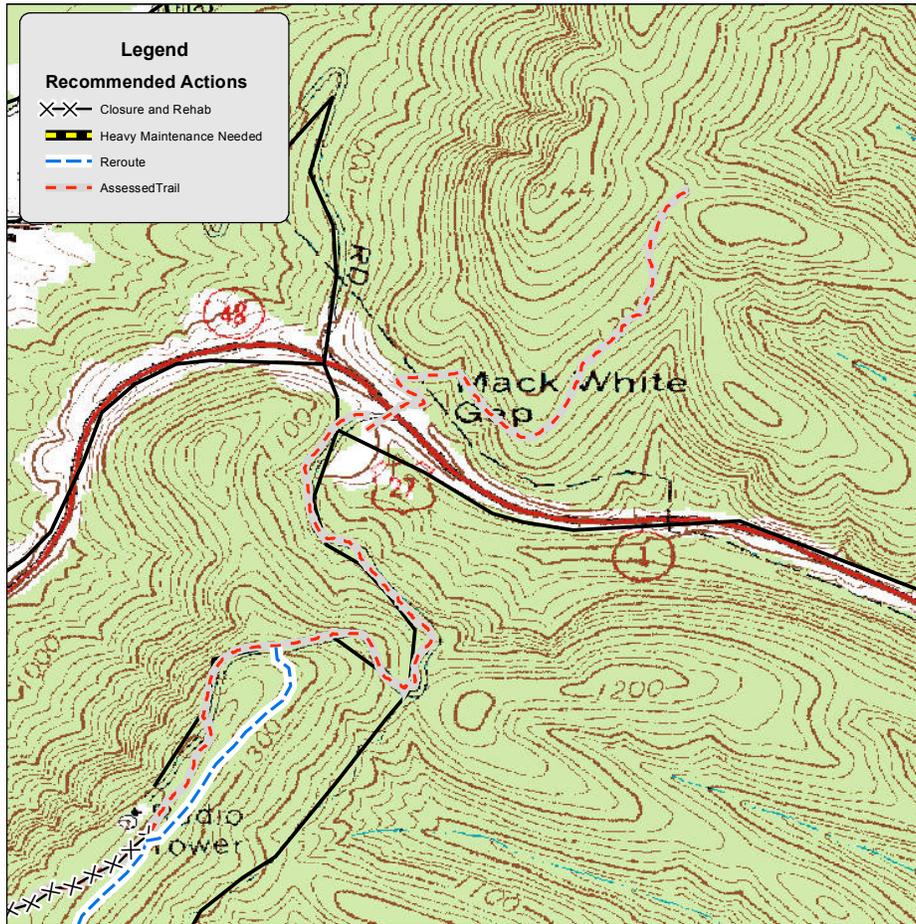
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	Y	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 60-84	60	48" on recently constructed climb to old road bed
Structure Width (")	60, bridges 48, other	36	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/6	<3/6	Some larger, loose rocks on final steep ascent to Taylor Ridge
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/20/5-15	2-10/15/5-10	Constructed climb has consistent 15-20% grade, old road near Taylor Ridge at 20+%
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	3-5/8	0-5/5	
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/4 (from TMO) 10/6-8	10/6-8	
Turn Radius (')	5-8	5-8	Turn radii on constructed section less than 5' and climbing grade >25%

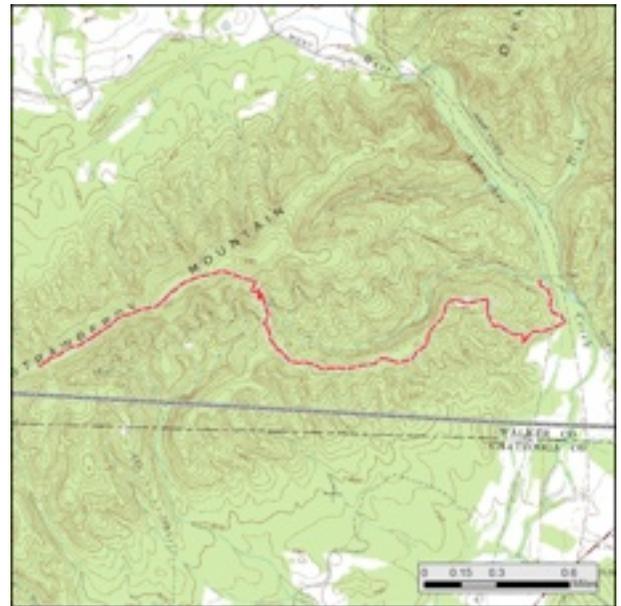
Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail begins across HWY 27 from Mack White TH and ascends to Taylor Ridge, crossing two power line easements. Trail is constructed from first to second switchback then follows old road bed to Taylor Ridge Road, which is open to vehicle traffic and accommodates two-way traffic
Social Setting	Trail seems to see very little use of any kind, other than power line access.
Managerial Setting	Old road beds would benefit from improved drainage maintenance as well as a turn to reduce grades near Taylor Ridge may be necessary if increased use develops. No trail crossing warning signs on HWY 27 contribute to substantial risk in crossing four-lane highway to access trail, especially for equestrians
Priorities	High- Work with GDOT to incorporate trail crossing warning signs and advanced notice Mack White Trailhead Medium- Institute water management maintenance program on old road beds Medium- Consider relocation and turn at steep portion near Taylor Ridge Road.

TRAIL: PINHOTI

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Pinhoti
Trail Number	3
Miles Assessed	
Beg. Location	Manning Mill Rd Trailhead
End Location	Strawberry West Road
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Pack & Saddle



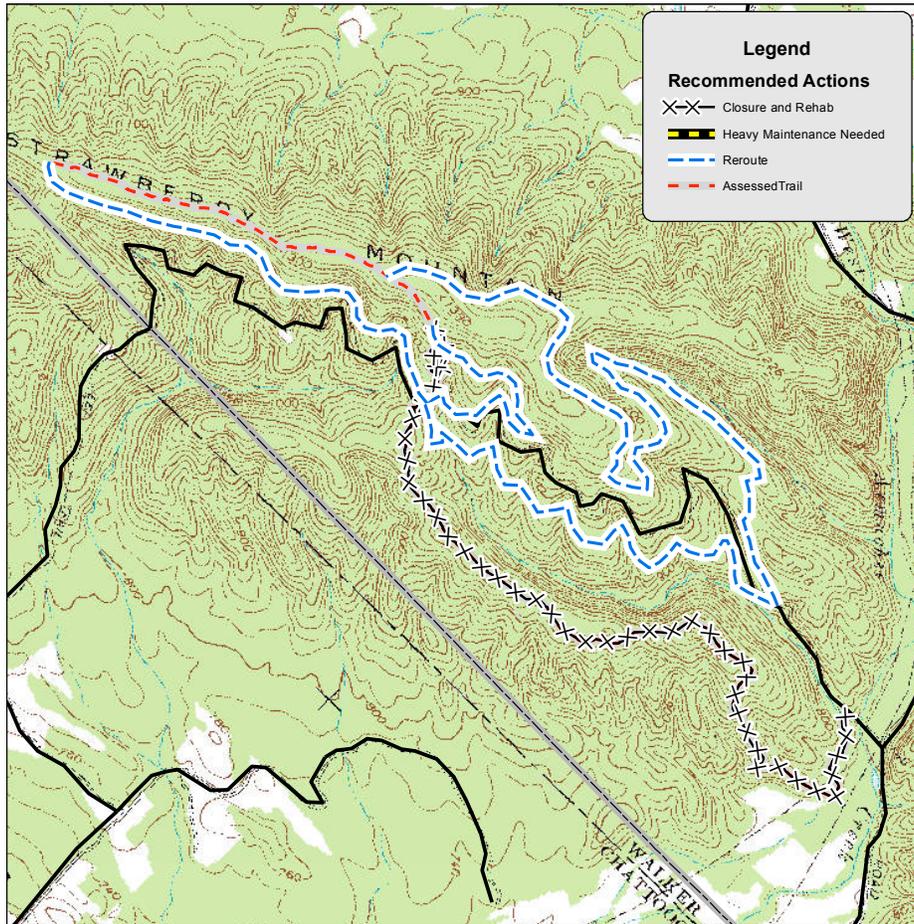
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	Y	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 60-84	60	48" on recently constructed climb to old road bed below Manning Mill Rd., 96" above to ridgeline, 12" on ridgeline to Strawberry West road
Structure Width (")	60, bridges 48, other	36	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/6	<3/6	Some larger, rocks on ridgeline portion
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/20/5-15	2-10/15/5-10	Constructed climbs have consistent 15-20% grades, with 30+% climbing turns
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	3-5/8	0-5/5	
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/4 (from TMO) 10/6-8	10/6-8	
Turn Radius (')	5-8	5-8	

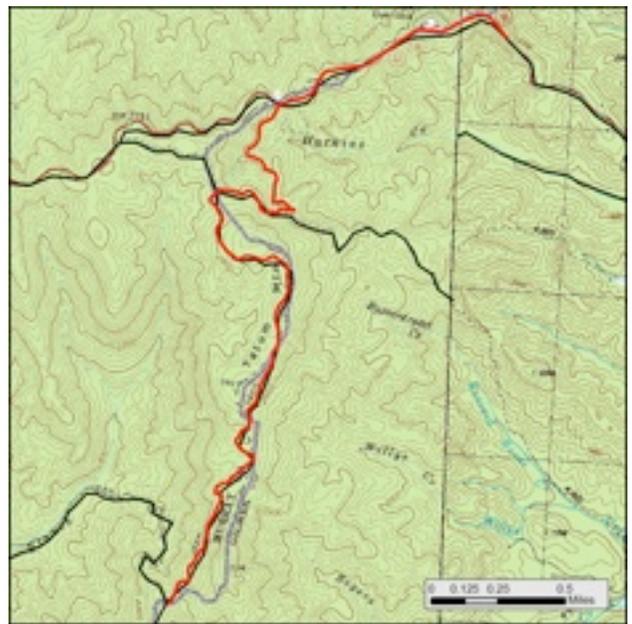
Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail runs on 10'-wide road bed until pipeline easement, constructed at 48" to ridgeline intersection with old road until junction with Manning Mill Road. Constructed at 96" to Strawberry Mountain ridgeline, then 12" wide and faint to Strawberry West road.
Social Setting	Trail seems to see very little use of any kind.
Managerial Setting	Old road beds would benefit from improved drainage maintenance. Constructed portions would benefit from longer runs to reduce grades or improved water management. Trail entrance signage at Manning Mill is somewhat confusing (not adjacent to trail).
Priorities	<p>Medium- Drainage maintenance work from Trailhead to first ridgeline and from Manning Mill Road to Strawberry Mountain ridgeline</p> <p>Medium- Consider additional, narrow trail for hike/bike use to create "figure eight" system to improve and diversify recreational experiences and compliment Dry Creek system.</p>

TRAIL: PINHOTI

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Pinhoti
Trail Number	3
Miles Assessed	4.01
Beg. Location	HWY 52, near Cohutta OL
End Location	Junction with Rock Creek Rd
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Hiker/Pedestrian



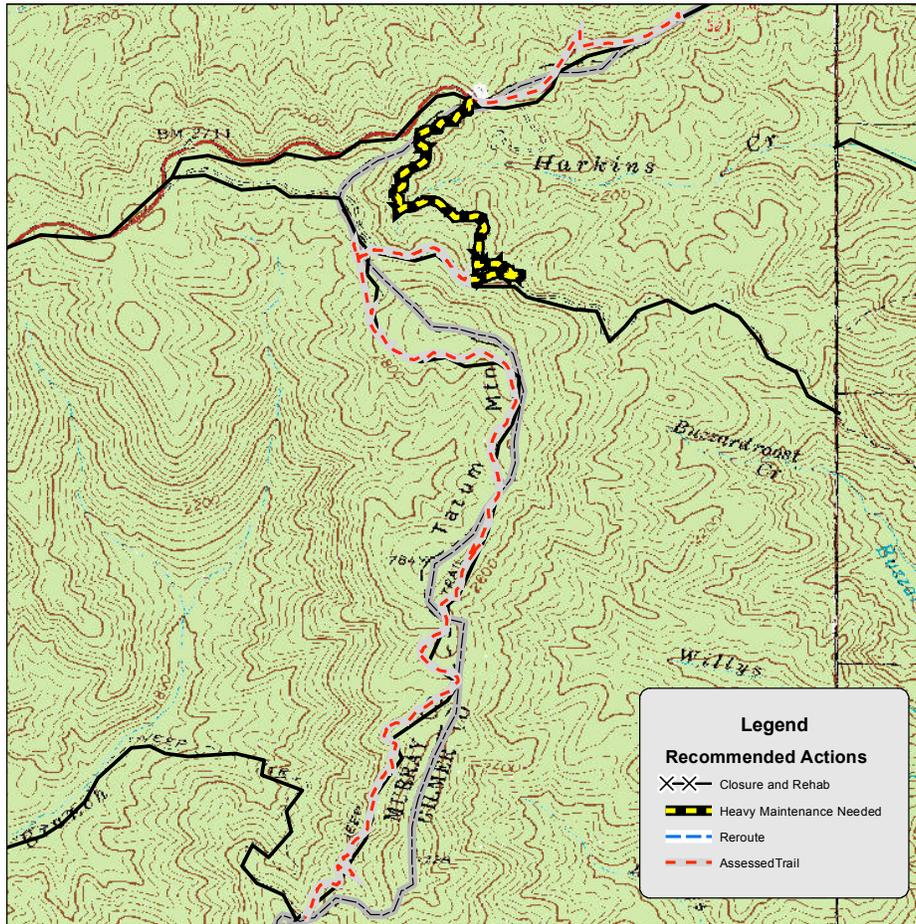
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	N	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 18-36	24	Much of trail is on old, 10'-wide road, remainder is 24"-wide singletrack
Structure Width (")	18 min.	18 min.	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Old road bed is gravel surfaced
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/10	<3/10	Tread relatively smooth. Largest obstructions were two, 6" high waterbars
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/25/10-20	2-10/15/5-20	Currently less than 10% average
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-10/15	3-7/10	
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/4 (from TMO) 7-8/3-5	7-8/3-5	Large trees in corridor on 24" wide section help to anchor downhill side of trail
Turn Radius (')	3-6	3-6	Existing turn is reasonably well designed, but needs better water management

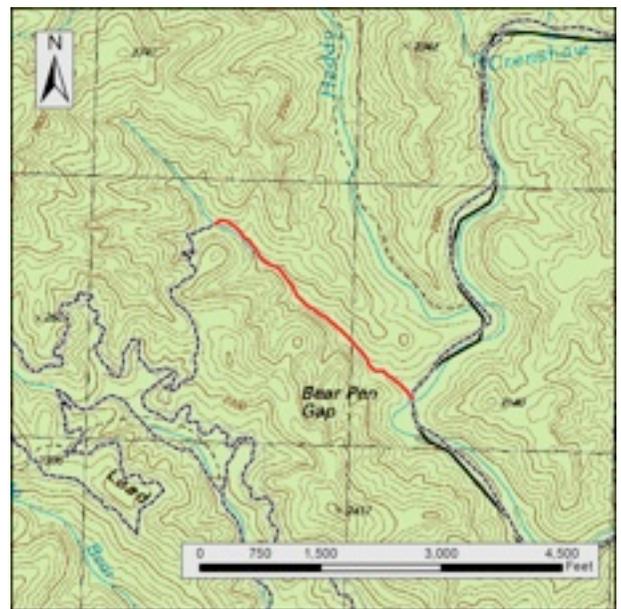
Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Section begins on HWY 52 for ~0.5 mile before becoming singletrack for ~0.75 miles. Trail seems to enter private land onto gated, grassy road, and remainder of trail is on FDR 631, open to vehicles toward Tatum Mtn. ridge.
Social Setting	Use levels seem low to moderate and trail conditions demonstrate low probability for use conflicts between hike and bike users.
Managerial Setting	Little apparent maintenance in past. Maintenance needed includes rolling grade dips at 75-100' intervals, improved water management on singletrack at climbing turn and at junction with grassy road
Priorities	Medium- Institute maintenance program to better manage water on trail

TRAIL: PINHOTI

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Pinhoti
Trail Number	3
Miles Assessed	0.7
Beg. Location	Unnamed tributary
End Location	Jct. w/ Mountaintown Creek
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Hiker/Pedestrian



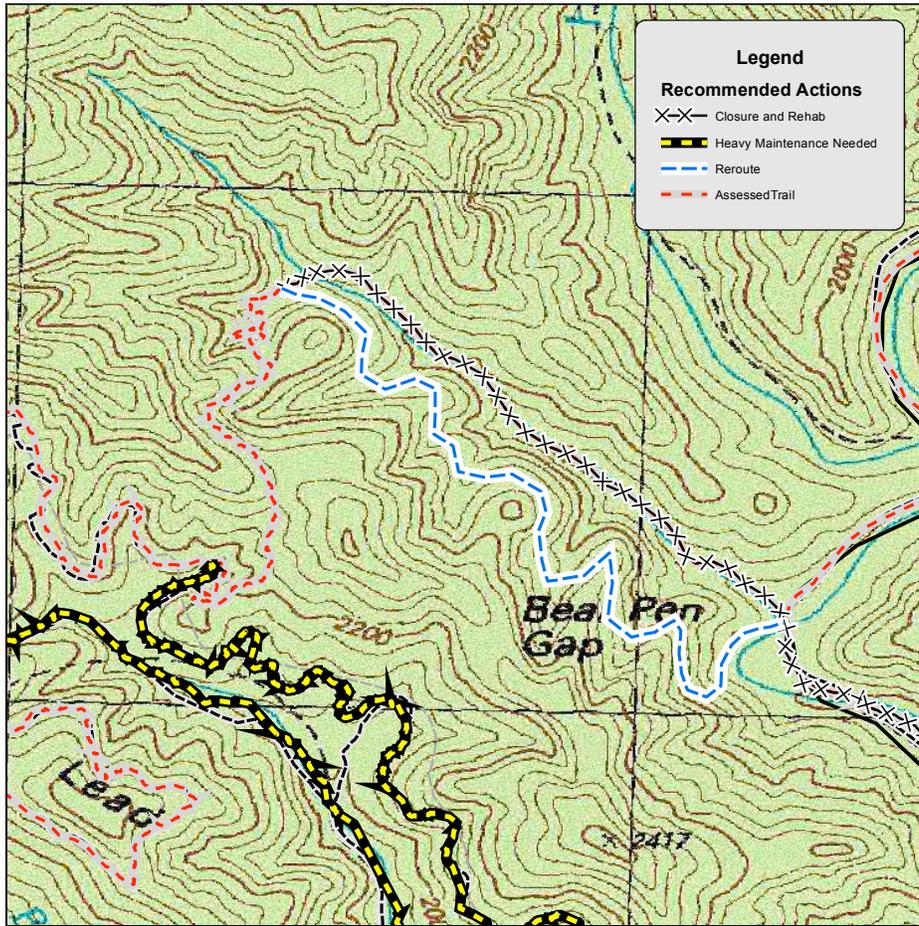
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	Y	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 18-36	24	Section located on old road of 6-10' in width, following 24" bench cut singletrack to Bear Creek jct.
Structure Width (")	18 min.	18 min.	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/10	<3/10	A number of short rock scrambles with larger obstacles
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/25/10-20	2-10/15/5-20	Generally flat with some steep, 20+% pitches
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-10/5	3-7/10	
Clearing Height/Width	10/4 (from TMO) 7-8/3-5	8/4	
Turn Radius (')	3-6	3-6	

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Bear Creek/Pinhoti to assessed segment is 24" wide singletrack with some steep pitches. Assessed section is located on old road bed (8'-wide average) that parallels stream with a number of wet crossings, a few rock scrambles, and soft, wet tread to junction with Mountaintown Creek Trail.
Social Setting	Trail sees low to moderate use with some mountain bike use apparent.
Managerial Setting	Water is not managed on current trail and location adjacent to creek with wet side drainage crossings increase the potential for sedimentation. Lack of legal bicycle connectivity from Mountaintown Creek to Bear Creek trails impacts potential trail system experiences in the area.
Priorities	<p>High- Relocate entire section to sideslope location on western side of stream, descending to existing trail junction to improve user experience and mitigate potential water quality degradation issues.</p> <p>High- Open use to mountain biking to provide connectivity between Bear Creek and Mountaintown Creek trails (both already open to bike use) and further discourage trespass onto private property south of Pinhoti/Mountaintown Creek trail junction.</p>

Representative Photographs:



Above Left and Right: Pinhoti Trailhead and Kiosk

Left: Much of the Pinhoti is co-located with existing Forest roads



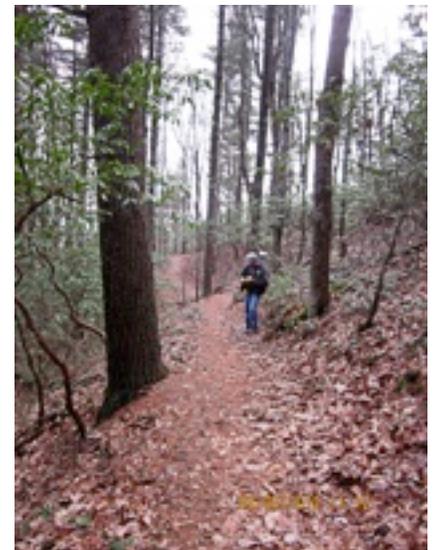


Above and Below Left: Many non-road sections of the trail exceed sustainable grades and have little actual trail construction



Above Right and Below: The large amount of road-based mileage that is linear in nature detracts from potentially very scenic and enjoyable trail



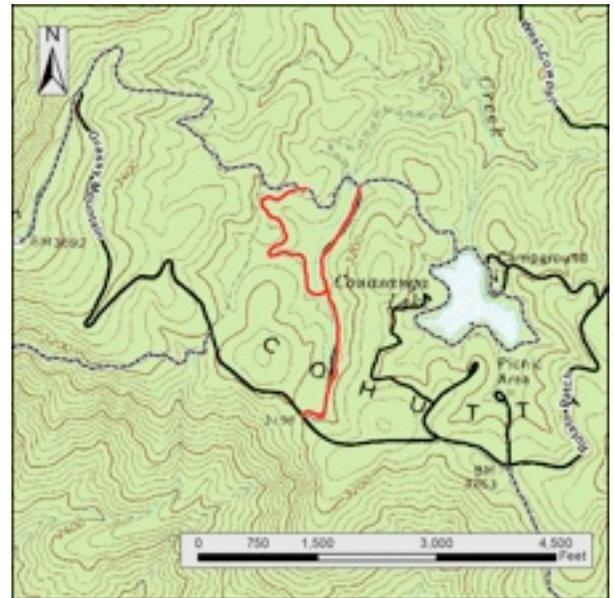


Clockwise from Above: Countour section of trail sustainably routed through a drainage. Trail users route around the left of the water bar, allowing drainage to continue down the trail tread. Contour section of trail in a steep sidehill location manages trail users, water, and provides an intimate recreational experience. Trail routed above a large tree provides a visual “anchor” that adds interest and confines the trail to a narrow corridor. Road-based portion of the Pinhoti that provides a stark contrast in recreation quality relative to the other photos on this section of the trail.



TRAIL: SONGBIRD

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Songbird
Trail Number	138
Miles Assessed	1.16
Beg. Location	FDT 40
End Location	FDT 40
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Hike



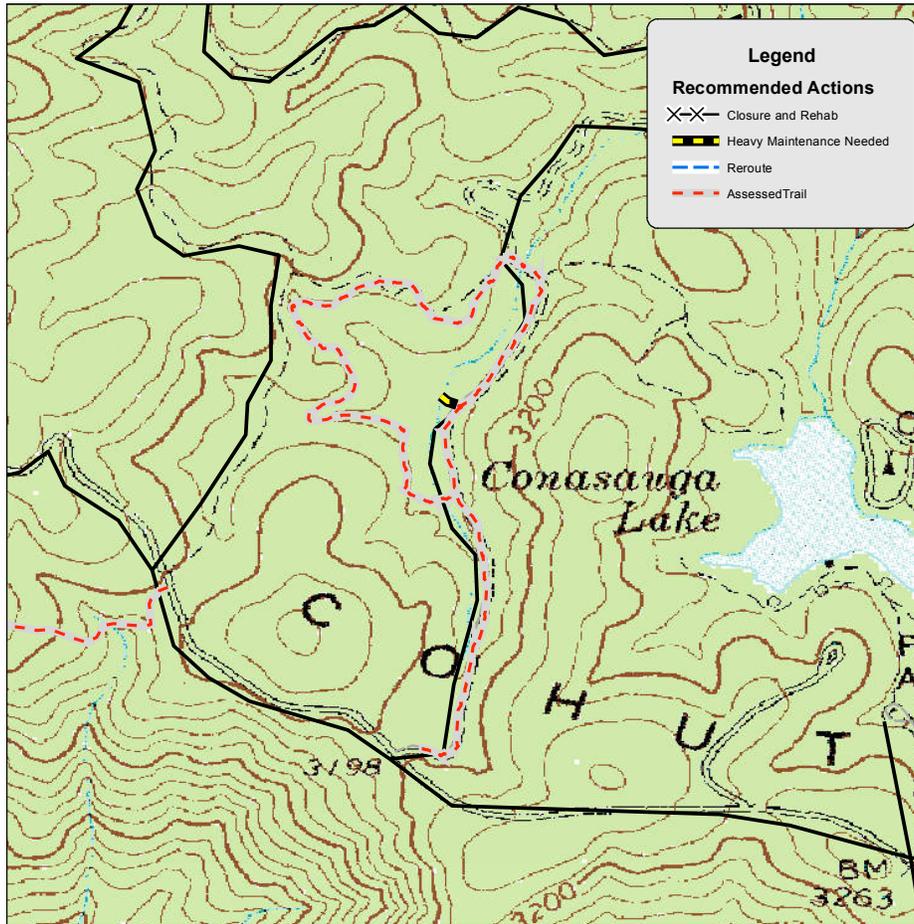
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	N	N	N	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	24 (from TMO) 36-60	24	Includes gravel-surfaced road section 8-10' wide
Structure Width (")	18 min.	24 min.	Bridges at 24" minimum, overlook structures at 48" minimum
Tread Surface	Native w/on-site borrow	Native, natural surface	Gravel on section co-located with Tower Trail and road
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/10"	<3/10	Several tread constrictions/gateways to 24" currently exist
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/25/10-20	3-5/8/5	Currently mostly mellow grades throughout loop
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-10/15	0-5/8	
Clearing Height/Width (')	8/4	8/4	
Turn Radius (')	3-6	4-8	

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail begins on 10'-wide gravel road, then becomes 24" tread and a "lollypop" loop. There were a number of trail tread structures (bridges, bog bridges, etc) and also interp signage, a kiosk with map and overlook structure at the beaver pond. The overlook structure was in good shape and included built in seating and an interp sign. A major risk management concern was a large hole just off tread and right at the entrance of the platform.
Social Setting	Trail is situated between two developed recreation areas (Overflow Campground and Lake Conasauga Campground). Because of the potentially high volumes of relatively inexperienced trail users, trail should be more formal than its current state.
Managerial Setting	Risk management and maintenance concerns (overlook platform viewing pond with large hole adjacent), wood structures degrading, slip potential, railings, and narrow width of wood structures.
Priorities	High- bridges and wood structures are under-designed and -built (too narrow, need more handrail etc) and many are currently failing, creating significant risk management concerns that need to be addressed immediately Medium- Make accessibility improvements in tread and structure width, and tread firmness

Representative Photographs:



Above: Trail begins on old road bed before narrowing down to 24" tread

Right: Interpretive signage around entire loop

Below: One of many bridges present along trail route





Top Left: Failing bridge

Above: Bridge forming dam with upstream vegetation pile

Left: Large, deep hole near on trail near bridge posed hazardous condition

TRAIL: SOUTH FORK

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	South Fork
Trail Number	140
Miles Assessed	2.70
Beg. Location	CR 2 near Dyer Gap
End Location	Elliot Road
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	Horse



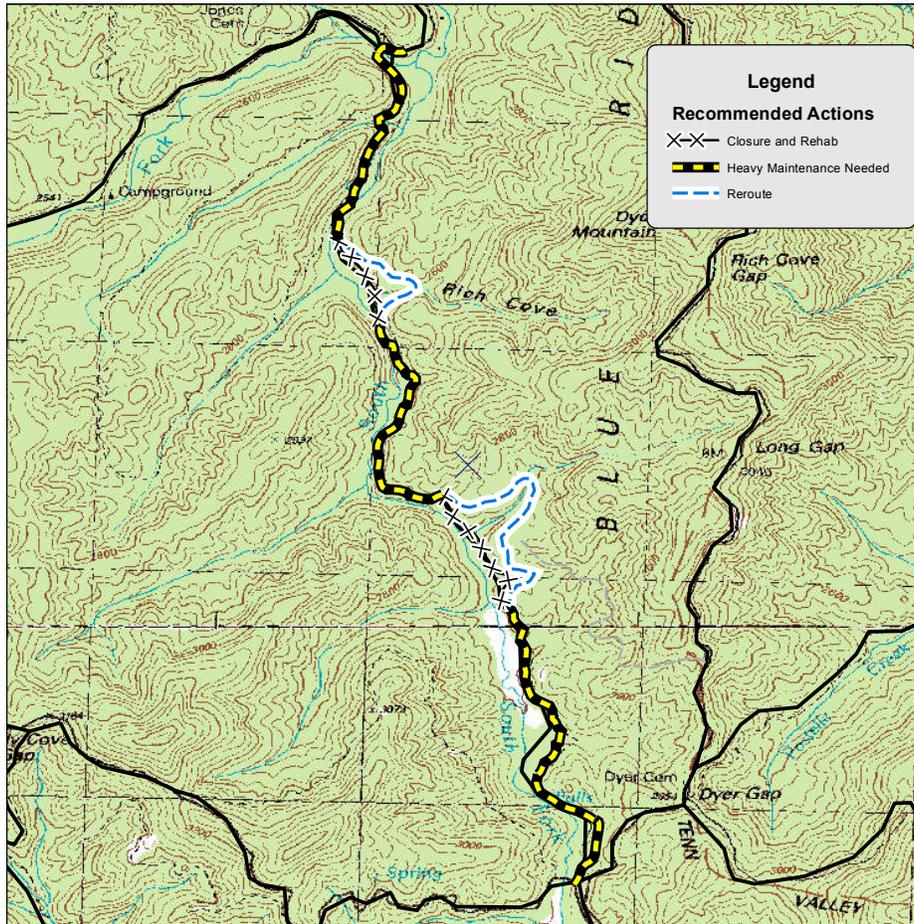
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	Y	N	Trail and TMO are not developed to meet Equestrian Design Parameters or handle that use.

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	36 (from TMO) 60-84	60	Trail on old road bed w/some recent relocations of 24" tread
Structure Width (")	60 min for bridges 36 min for other	60 min for bridges 48 min for other	Stream crossing hardening and definition needed
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Plentiful mudholes and incision require stabilization
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/6	<3/6	Some deadfall across trail, protrusions growing well beyond 6" due to erosion
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	3-12/20/5-15	2-10/15/5-10	Relocations have lower gradient (up to 15%)
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	3-5/8	0-5/5	
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/5 (from TMO) 10/6-8	10/6-8	
Turn Radius (')	5-8	5-8	

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Trail mostly follows old, incised road bed w/ numerous mudholes. Little corridor clearing has led to grown-in condition with numerous deadfall across trail. Rolling grade dips are frequently failing- crest degradation or drains full. Numerous water crossings- some functional, others require stone armoring or bridges (users creating crossings). Geogrid in main crossing providing vertical compaction resistance, but 8" step is hazard.
Social Setting	Use volumes seem moderate, mostly by hikers and equestrians on the portion co-located with the Benton McKaye. More mountain bike evidence on northern end near Pinhoti Trail. Mellow, rolling grade, long sight lines, and corridor width minimize potential conflicts.
Managerial Setting	Confusing regulatory signage and trail access locations/connectivity with other facilities. Campsites/fire pits in trail corridor. Entire trail needs maintenance/design that fits within equestrian design parameters to withstand that use (recent relocations degrading quickly due to insufficient specifications).
Priorities	<p>High- Move trail entrance to junction with FDR 126 on north end, directly connect trail to picnic area on south end, sign intersections along route.</p> <p>High- Institute consistent maintenance of water management and stream crossings</p> <p>High- Maintenance and/or relocations should meet equestrian design parameters and built to withstand that use.</p>

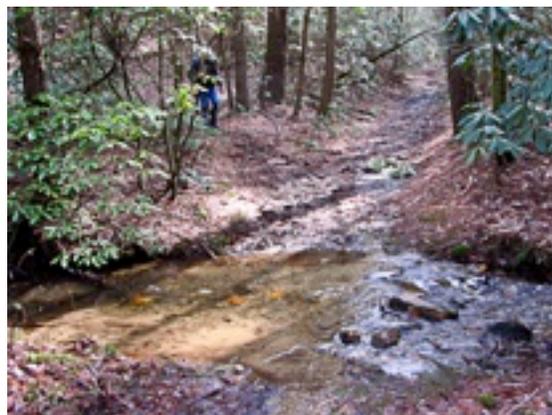
Representative Photographs:



Right: Signage directing trail users to Alabama

Below Right: Stream crossing is not hardened and drainage is not controlled from upstream. Incised old road bed gathers water and directs it to the creek

Below Left: Trail condition under-developed for equestrian use and intersection at stream crossing increases probability of vegetation trampling and sedimentation

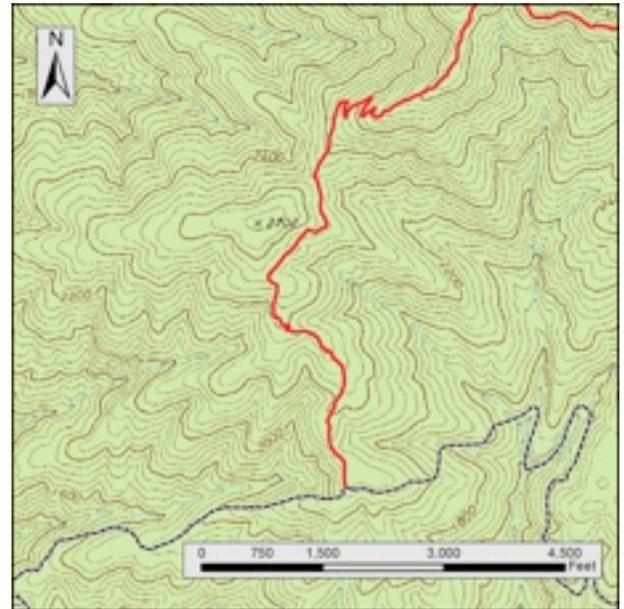


Above Left and Right and Left: Unmanaged drainage leading to flowing water. Lower crossing is hardened at entrance but drainage is not managed leading to crossing



TRAIL: WINDY GAP

Ranger District	Conasauga
System Name	Windy Gap
Trail Number	154A
Miles Assessed	2.70
Beg. Location	FDR __ (near Songbird)
End Location	Jct. w/Tubbs Trail/154
Trail Class	3- Developed/Improved
Designed Use	OHV



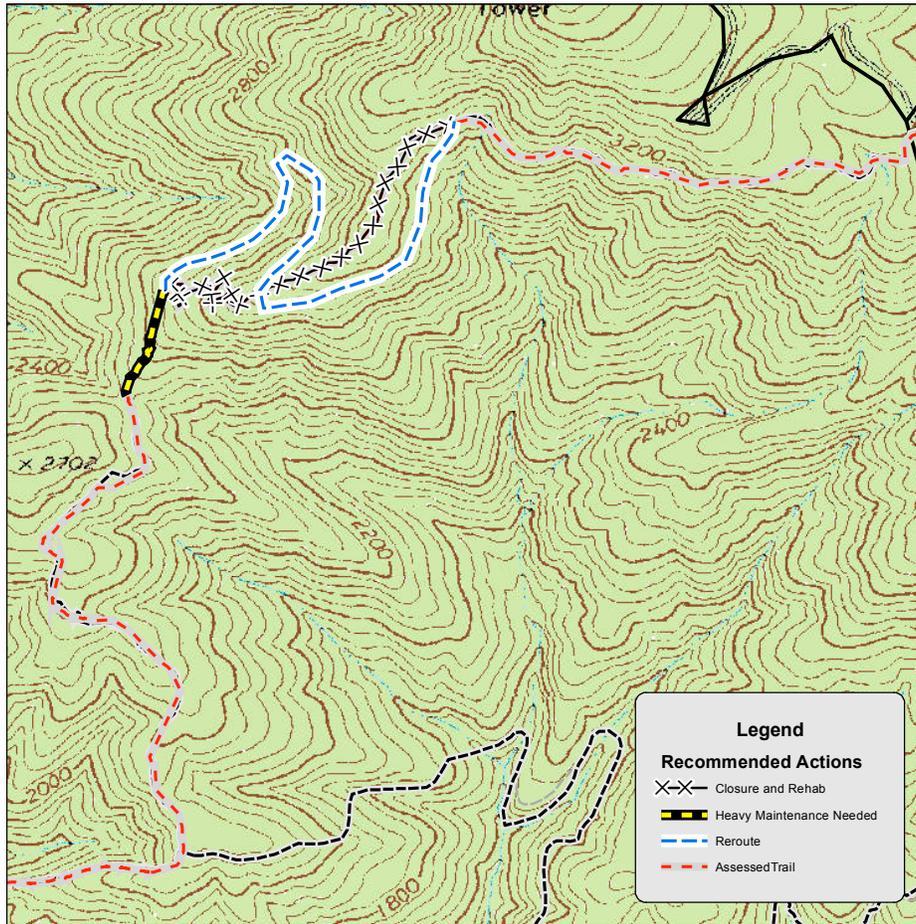
Travel Management Strategies:

Strategy	Hike	Bike	Horse	OHV	Comments
Managed Use	Y	Y	N	Y	

Design Parameter Recommendations:

Design Parameter	USFS DP Value	Rec DP Value	Exceptions/Comments
Tread Width (")	36 (from TMO) 48-96	48-96	Narrower than 48" on upper section, 96" at switchbacks and below
Structure Width (")	48	48" max.	
Tread Surface	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	Native, w/borrow for stabilization	
Protrusions/Obstacles (")	<3/12	<6/18	Many existing rock ledges over 12" and continuous rock gardens
Target Grade/Max/Density (%)	5-20/25/15-30	7-15/30/10-20	
Target Cross Slope/Max (%)	5-8/10	5-8/10	
Clearing Height/Width (')	10/5	10/5	Several blow downs on upper section
Turn Radius (')	4-6	10	Switchbacks being short cut due to difficulty

Recommendations



Setting	Comments
Physical Setting	Above switchbacks, trail more on contour, but with little effective water management. Trail steepens near switchbacks with much more active and effective water management. Switchbacks not in sufficient condition due to design and construction specifications and use stress.
Social Setting	Trail design at switchbacks is not conducive to motorized use and shortcutting taking place. Also, user-created side trails around uncleared blow downs are prevalent.
Managerial Setting	More active maintenance and stewardship would reduce side trail and subsequent erosion issues. ATV use being attempted and subsequent user-created trails formed.
Priorities	<p>High- Relocation at switchbacks to keep users on trail</p> <p>High- Rolling grade dip construction on top portion of trail</p> <p>High- Width restriction and signage at both ends of trail to deter atv use and new trail creation</p> <p>Medium- Volunteer maintenance assistance with corridor clearing and minor grading</p>

Representative Photographs:



Left: Trail located on old road bed with road-like maintenance features- steep, short tread crests

Above: Warning signage for trail difficulty

Below: Trailhead facility with loading ramp and empty kiosk





Clockwise from above: Dip attempts on fall-line trail require increasingly deep excavation upon successive events. Switchback deterioration due to lack of ohv-specific design and construction methods. Side-by-side use demonstrating trail width. Relatively rolling contour road/trail has much greater probability for maintenance success. Regulatory sign restricting atv use on old road that lacks width restrictors.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

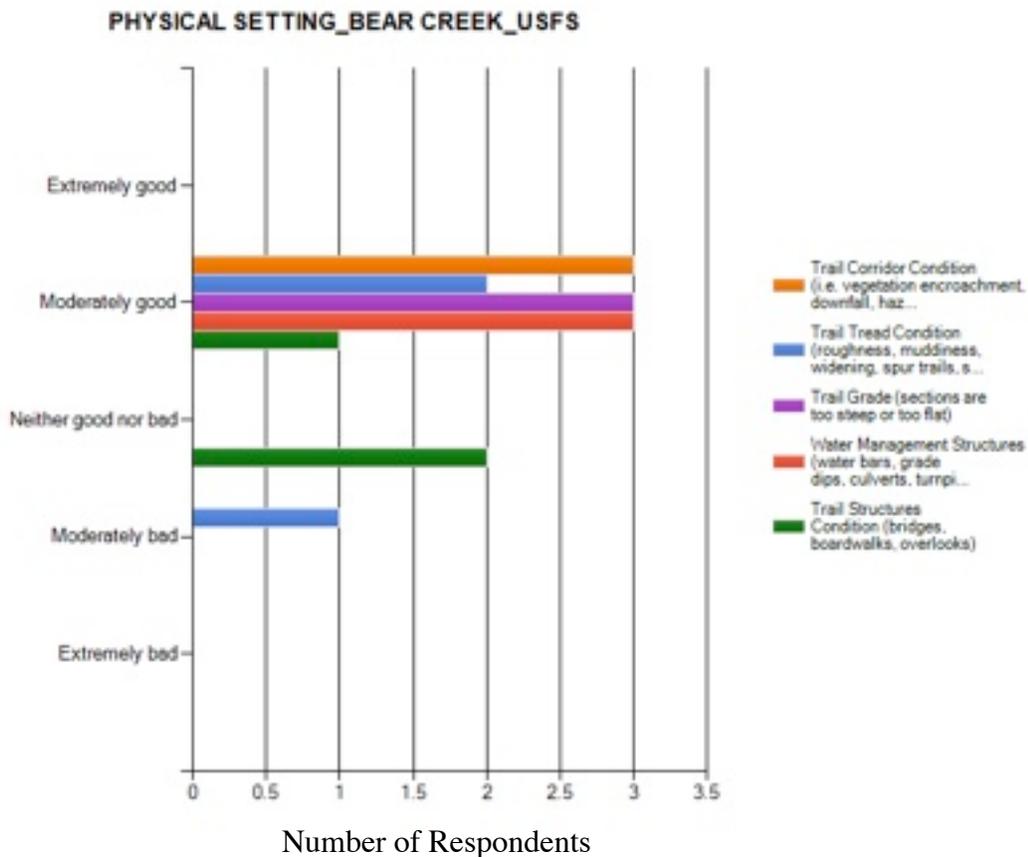
TRAIL: BEAR CREEK

Survey Results: Forest Service

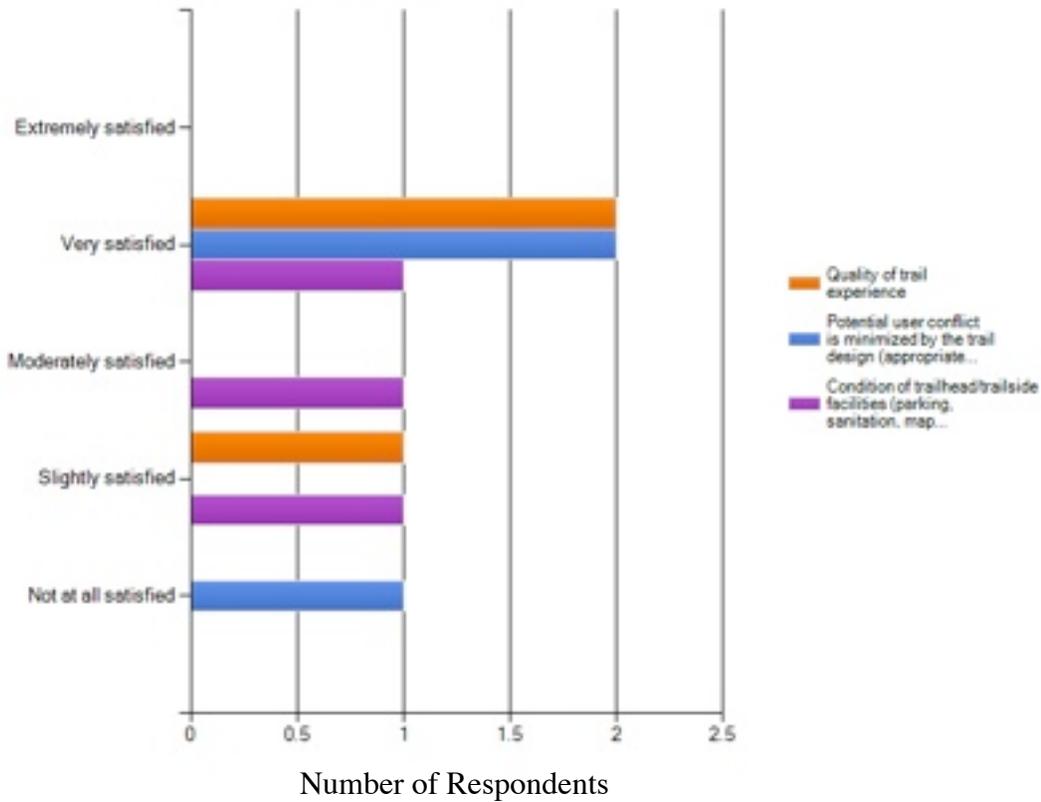
History: Old roadbed. Trail from FS-241 to Gennett poplar exists since 60s. Opened to mountain bikes in early 90s.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by CDTV, EMBA, SORBA.

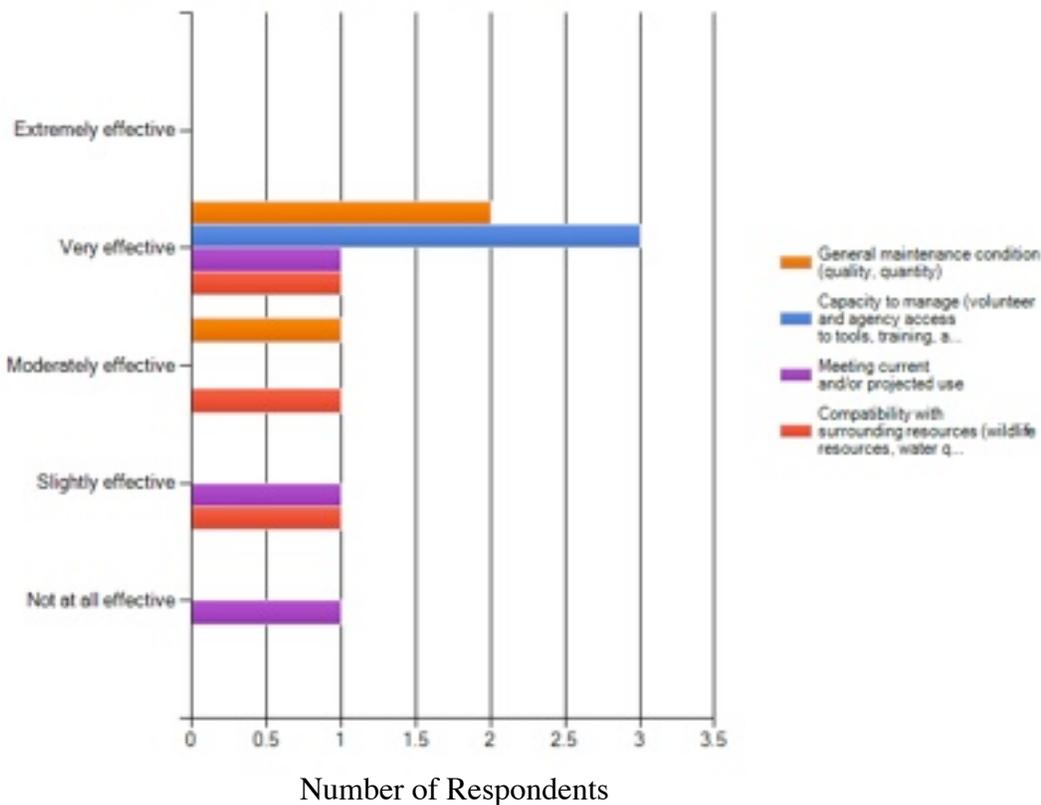
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assess entire length for sustainability and creek crossings



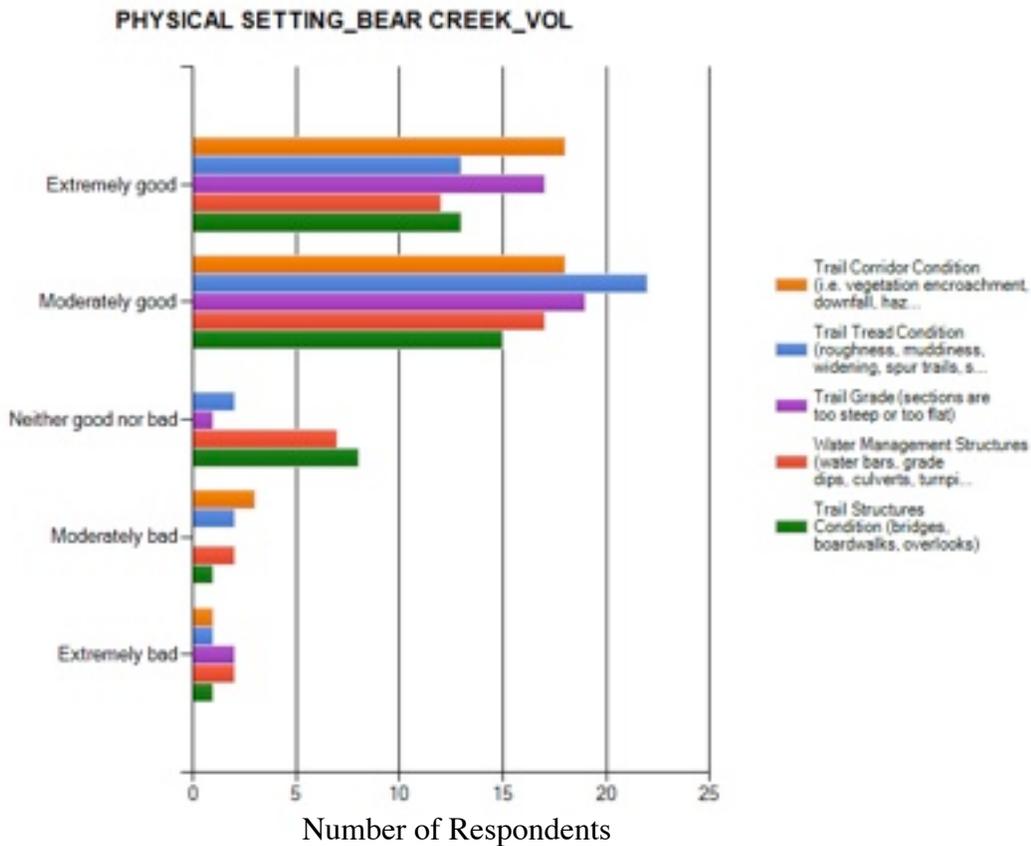
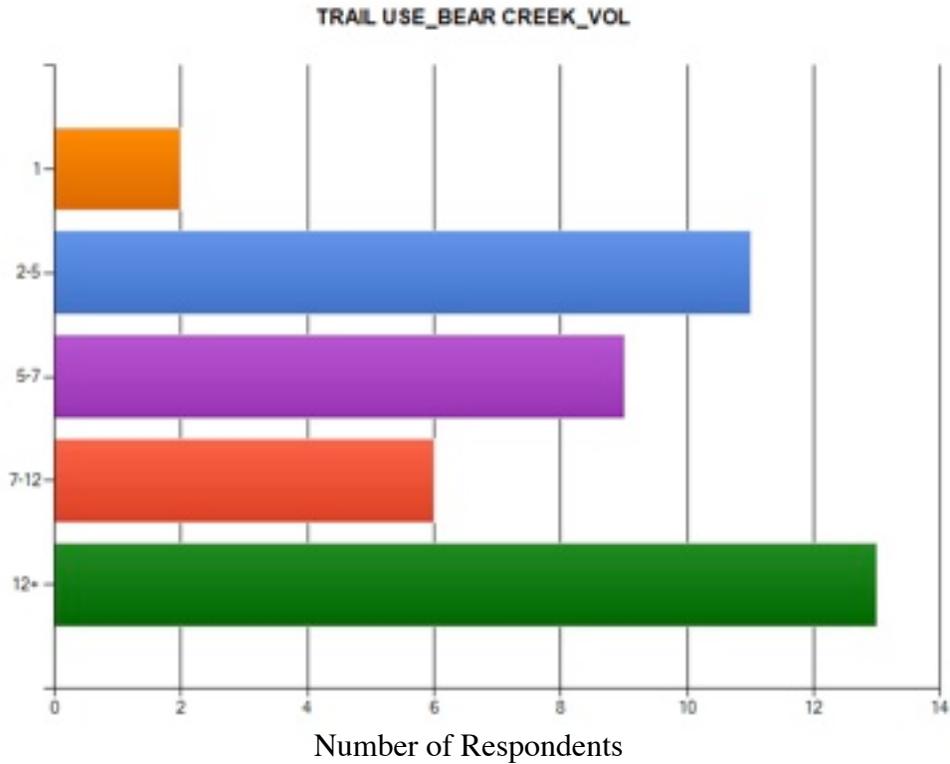
SOCIAL SETTING_BEAR CREEK_USFS



MANAGERIAL SETTING_BEAR CREEK_USFS

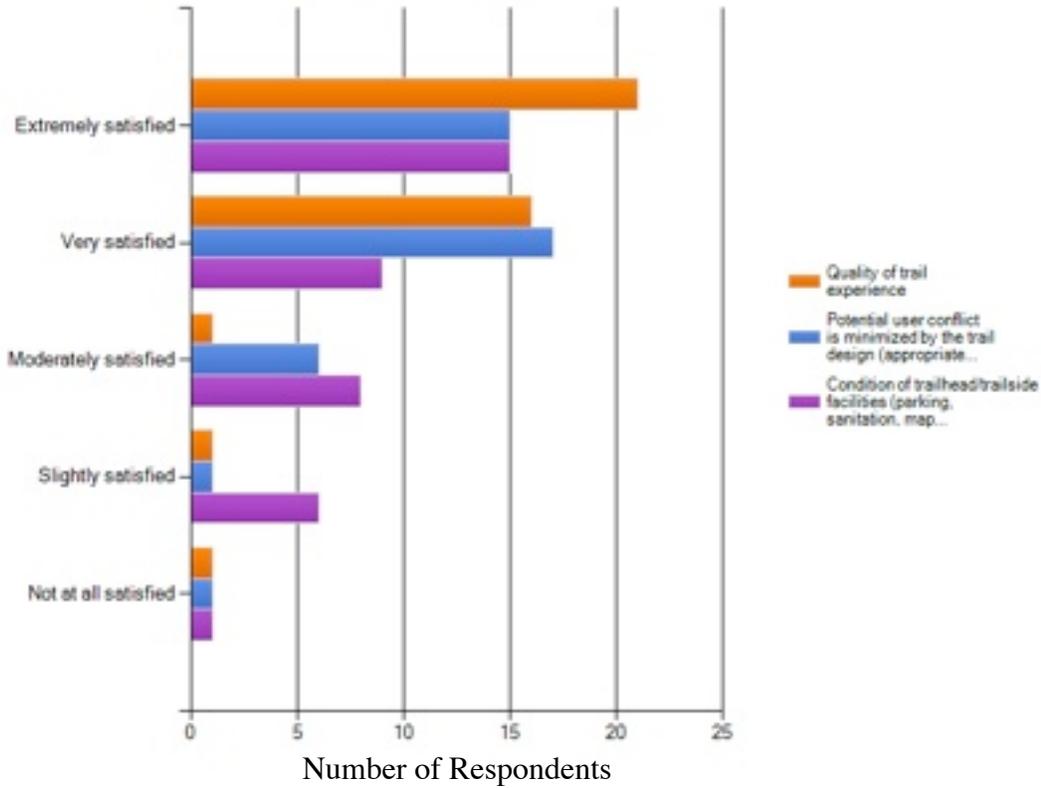


Survey Results: Volunteers

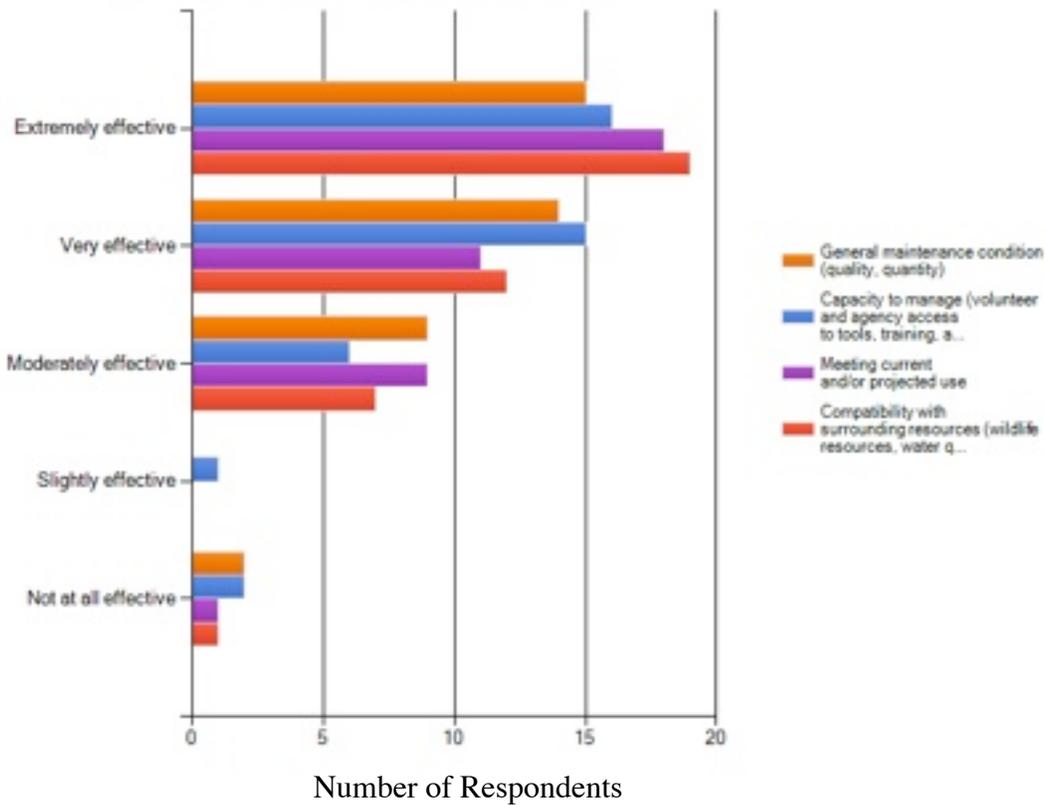


Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_BEAR CREEK_VOL



MANAGERIAL SETTING_BEAR CREEK_VOL



Volunteer Group Comments:

Georgia Forest Watch:

History: None provided.

Maintenance: Maintained sporadically by bike groups.

Use: Multi-use trail that contains a section of the Pinhoiti. Heavily used by bikes, and bike use has discouraged pedestrian use.

Issues: Subject to a major rework in the 90s that unfortunately resulted in tail ditches/water dips dumping silt loads directly into Bear Creek. No detention ponds or riprap barriers. The work resulted in a smoother tread-way and increased bike speed but has negatively impacted Bear Creek by increasing silt loads. This trail urgently needs attention as it serves as a point source of pollution. The signage is in disrepair.

IMBA/SORBA:

History: Opened to mountain bikes in the early 90s.

Maintenance: SORBA performs maintenance at the request of the forest service. Work parties are very well attended. On March 10th, 2012 we held a work party that attracted 75 volunteers!

Use: Heavily used by mountain bikers and hikers. Beautiful trail! One of the easier gem rides in the Cohuttas, attracts riders from all over the US. Great vistas, scenic creek ride. This is an intermediate/advanced beginner ride. It's not technical, but it has a long, steady climb. Amazing trail!!!

Issues: None, other than ga forestwatch would like to have mountain bikes excluded from this trail. But, they would love to have mountain bikers excluded from all trails. They are currently running an anti mountain biking campaign on their web site that includes misinformation, including video footage from trails that aren't even in the Chattahoochee Forest.

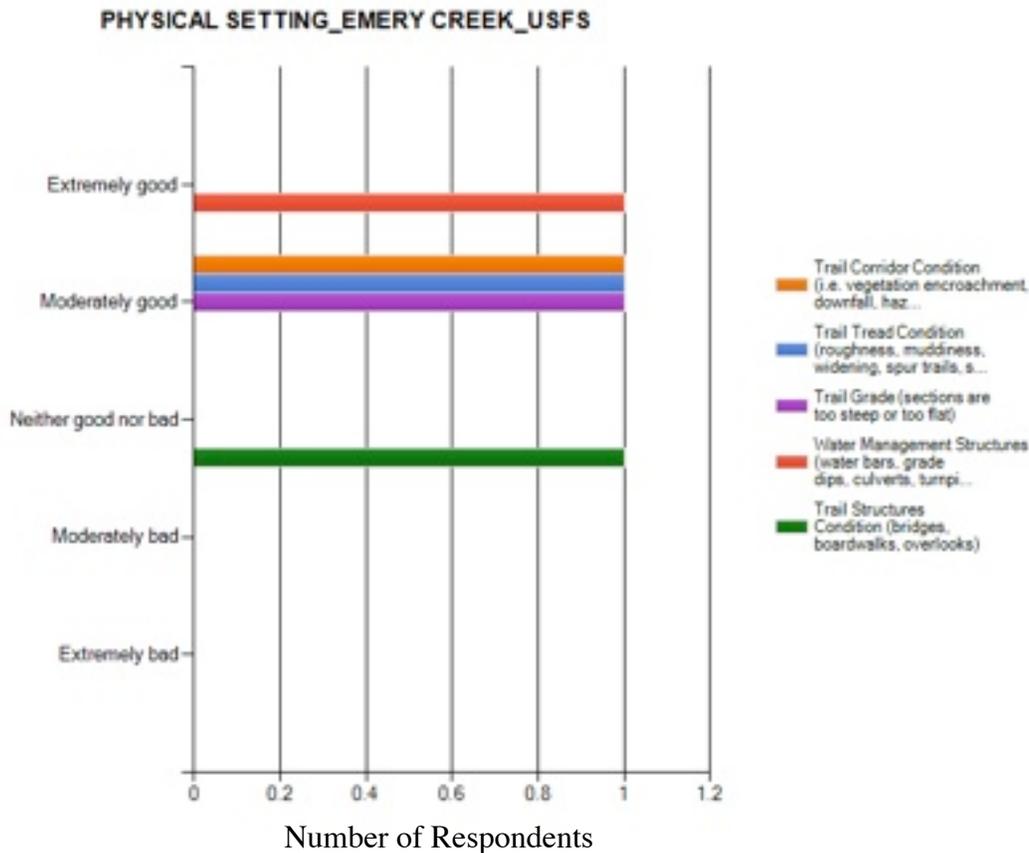
TRAIL: EMERY CREEK

Survey Results: Forest Service

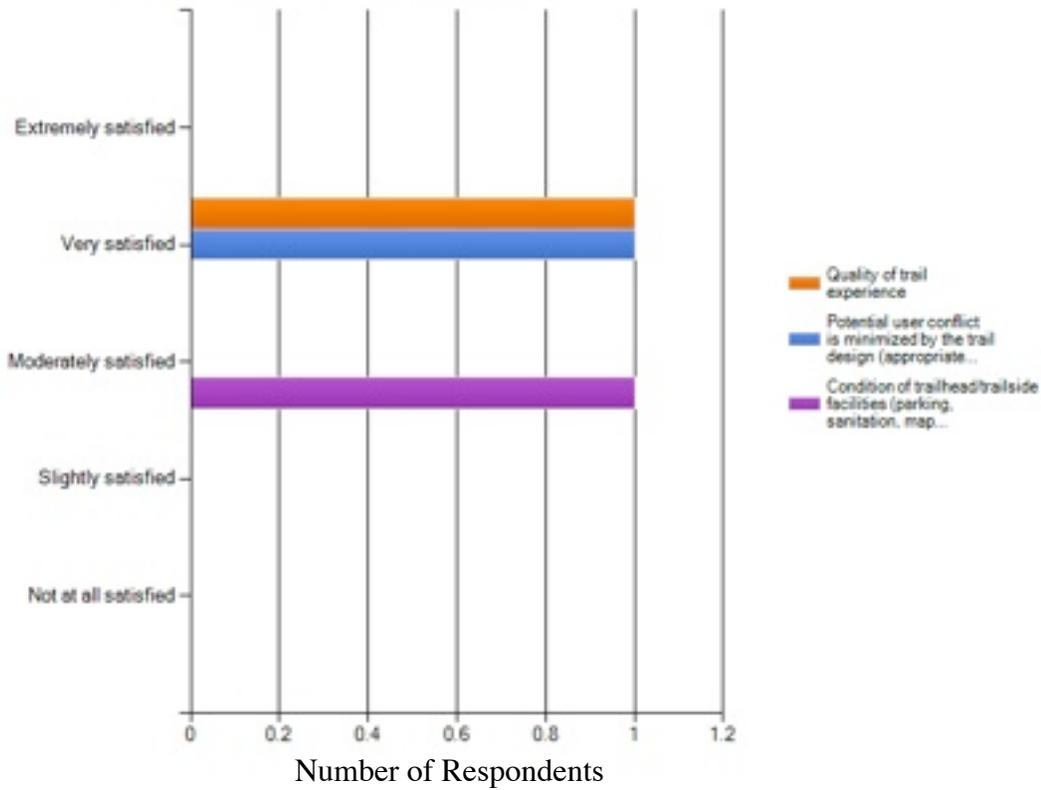
History: Lower half is old roadbed. Lower half exists since 60s. Upper half above falls constructed in 90s by Team Conasauga and FS.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by CDTV.

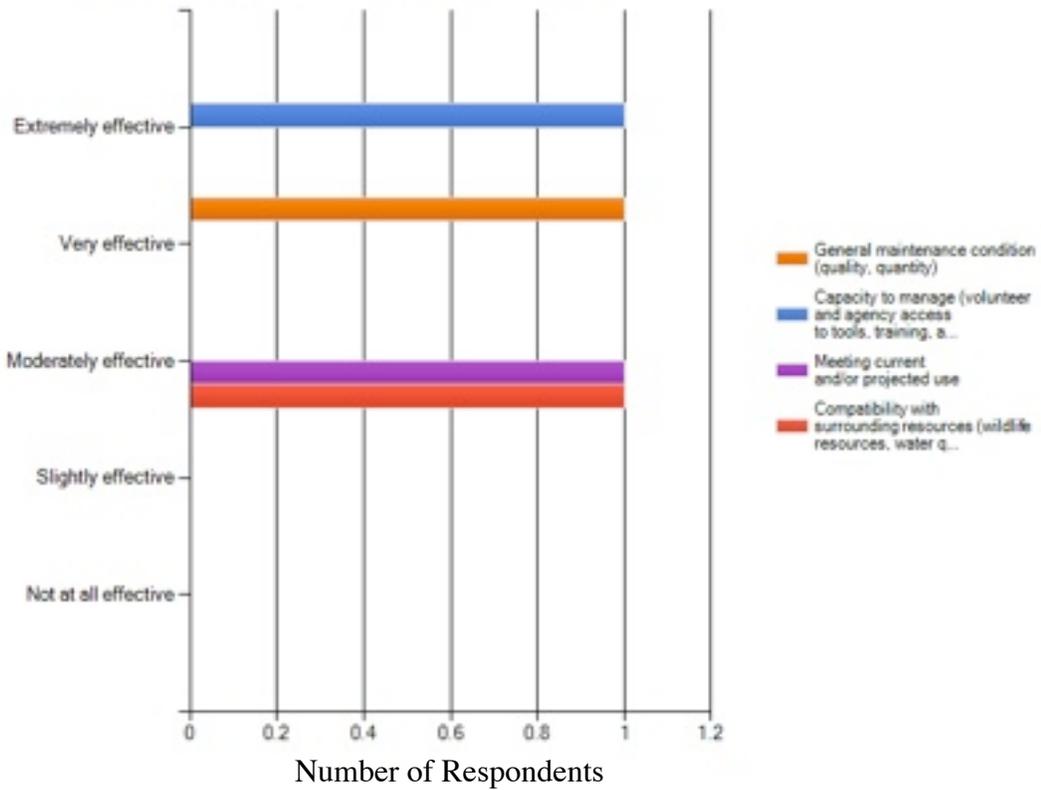
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assess lower half for sustainability, creek crossings, signing.



SOCIAL SETTING_EMERY CREEK_USFS

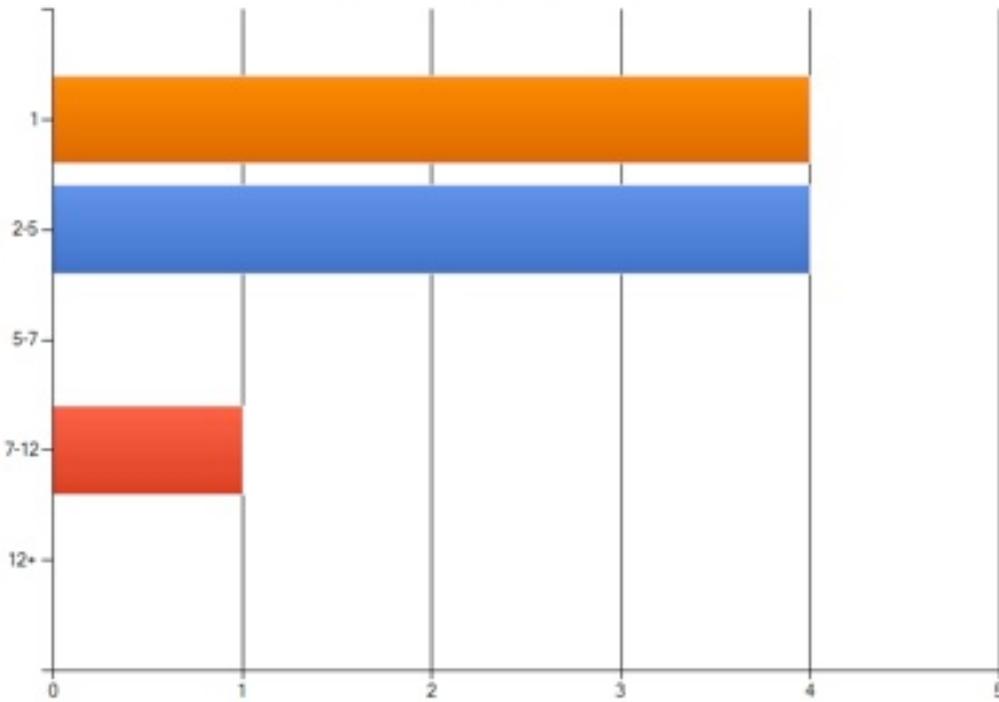


MANAGERIAL SETTING_EMERY CREEK_USFS



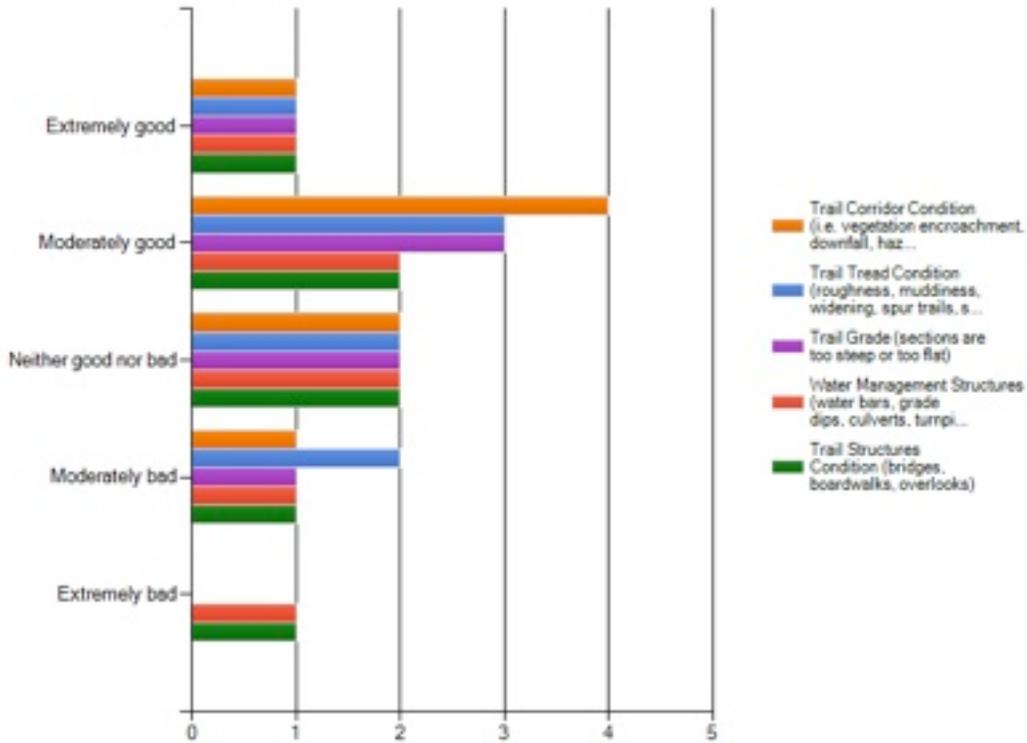
Survey Results: Volunteers

TRAIL USE_EMERY CREEK_VOL



Number of Respondents

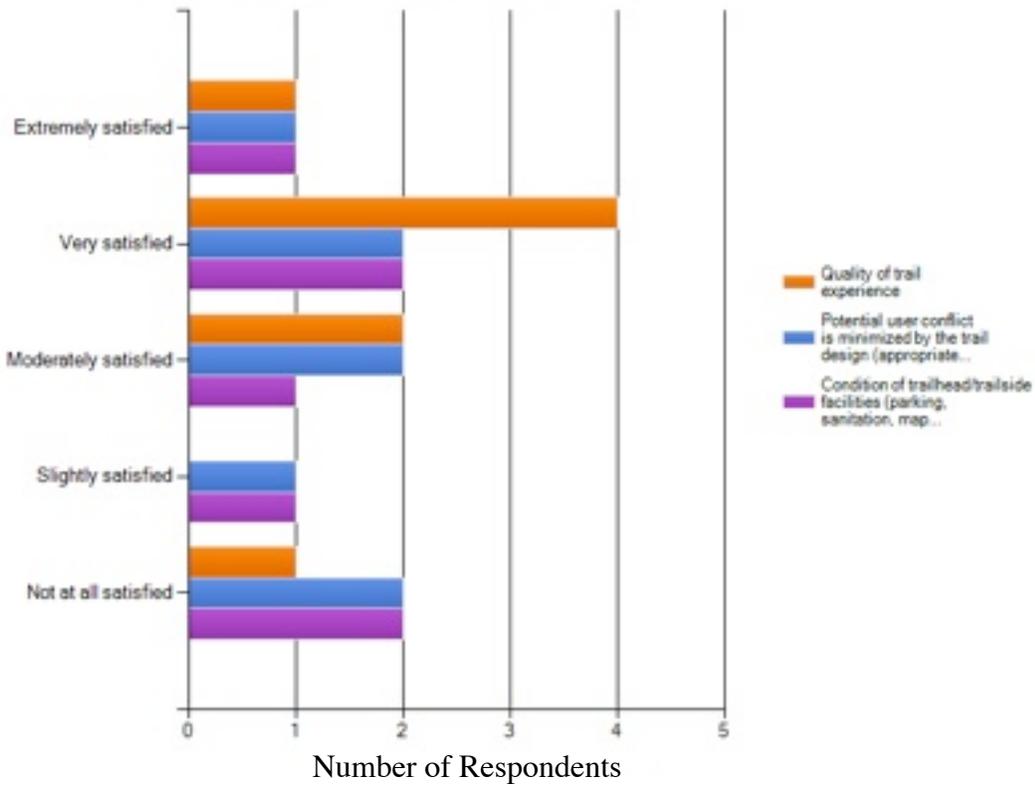
PHYSICAL SETTING_EMERY CREEK_VOL



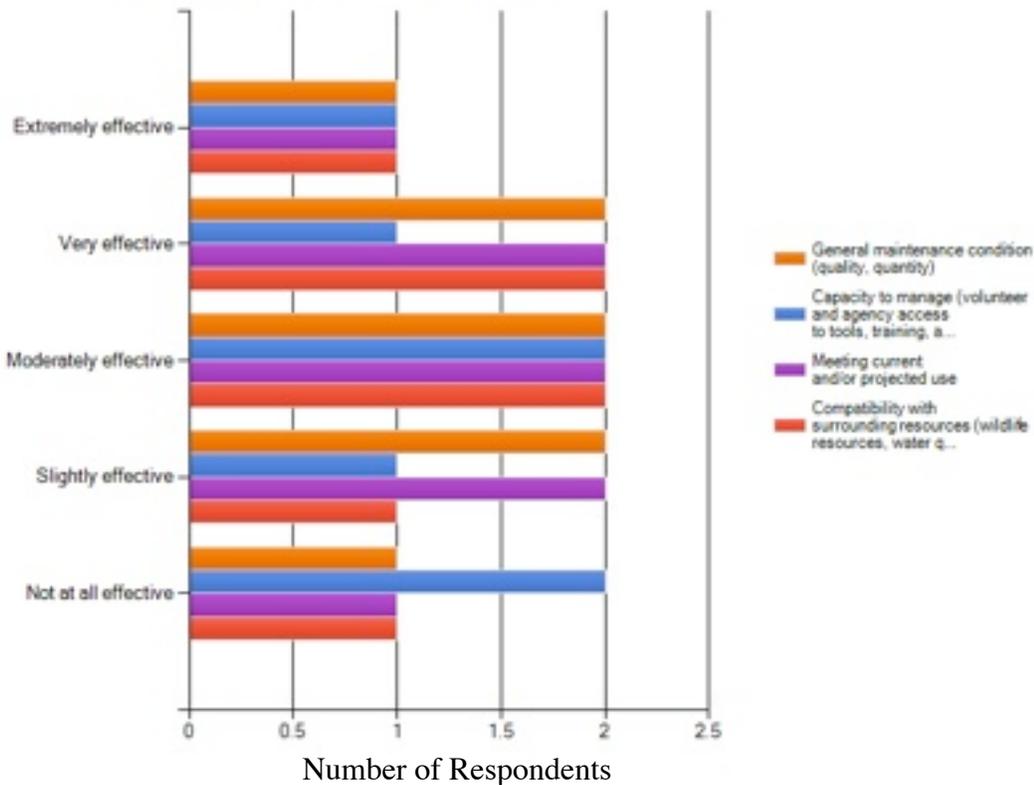
Number of Respondents

Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_EMERYCREEK_VOL



MANAGERIAL SETTING_EMERY CREEK_VOL



Volunteer Group Comments:

Mountain High Hikers:

I do not know the history of this trail or the present maintainers of this trail. Our Trail club hikes this trail 1-2 times per year. The trail up to the first creek crossing gets heavy use from locals especially in the summer months for swimming access. The multiple creek crossings on this trail can be quite problematic with high water. The scenic area between the 2 waterfalls that is used as a camping area is being overused, and camping should be prohibited here

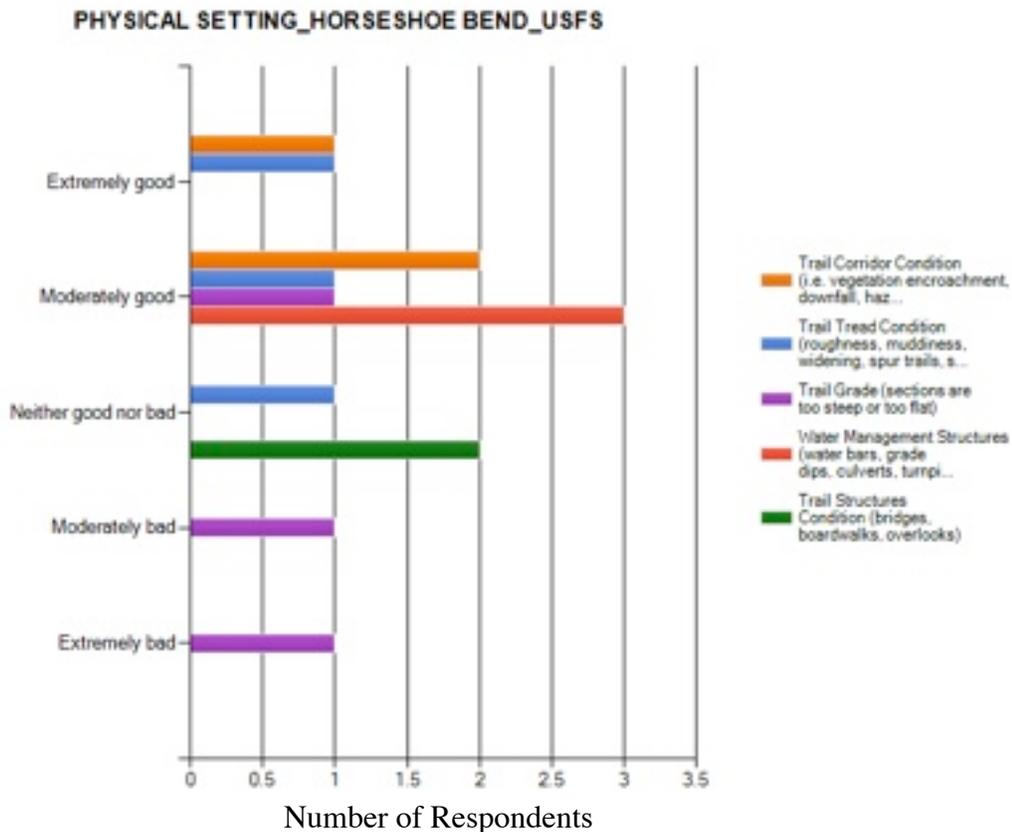
TRAIL: HORSESHOE BEND

Survey Results: Forest Service

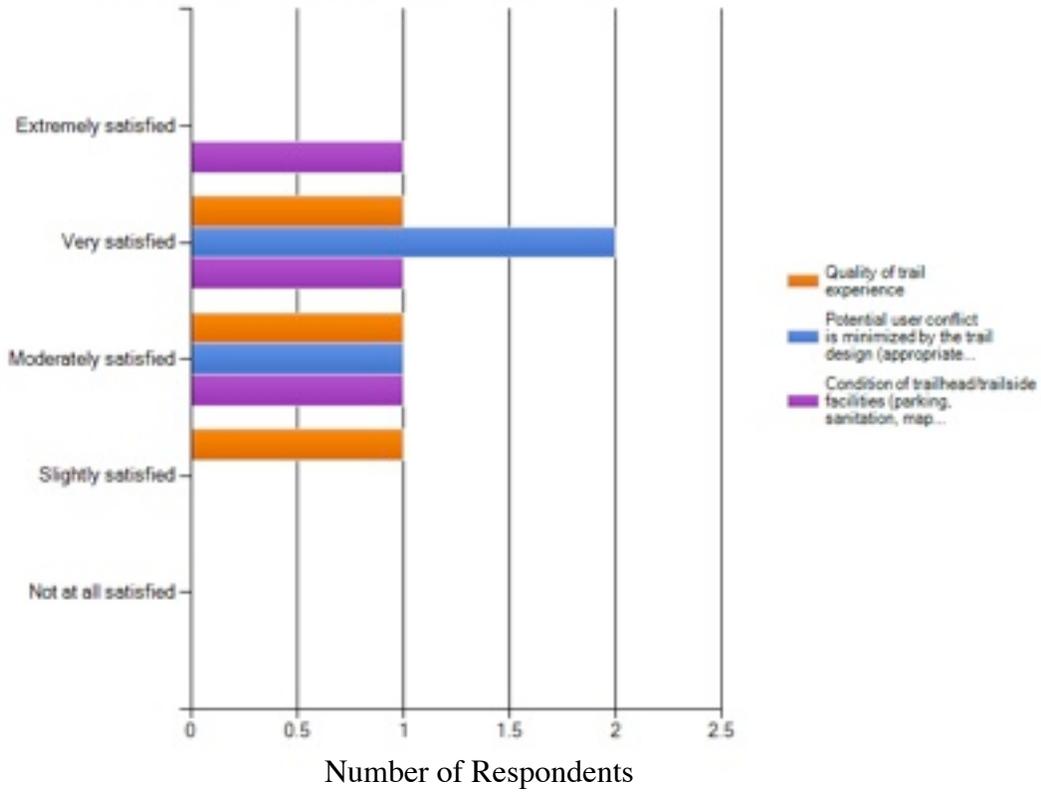
History: Middle section is old roadbed. Original 1975 Wilderness trail.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by CDTV.

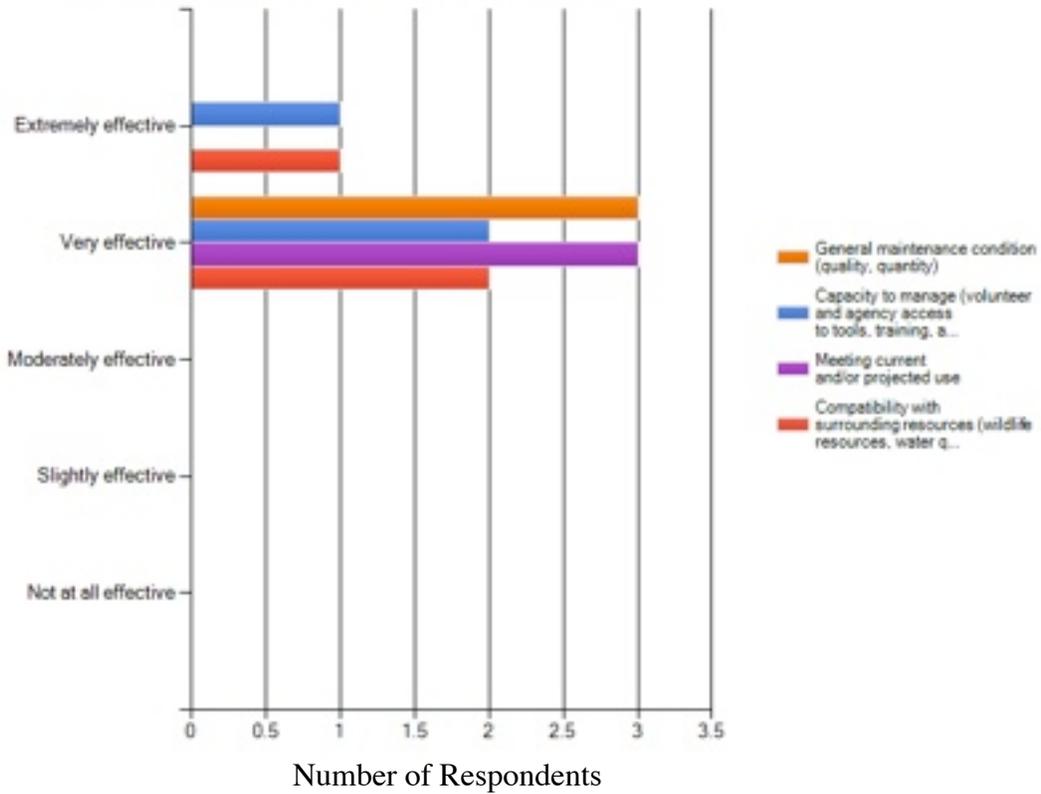
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assessment of last 0.5 mile for relocation due to extreme steepness and erosion potential



SOCIAL SETTING_HORSESHOE BEND_USFS

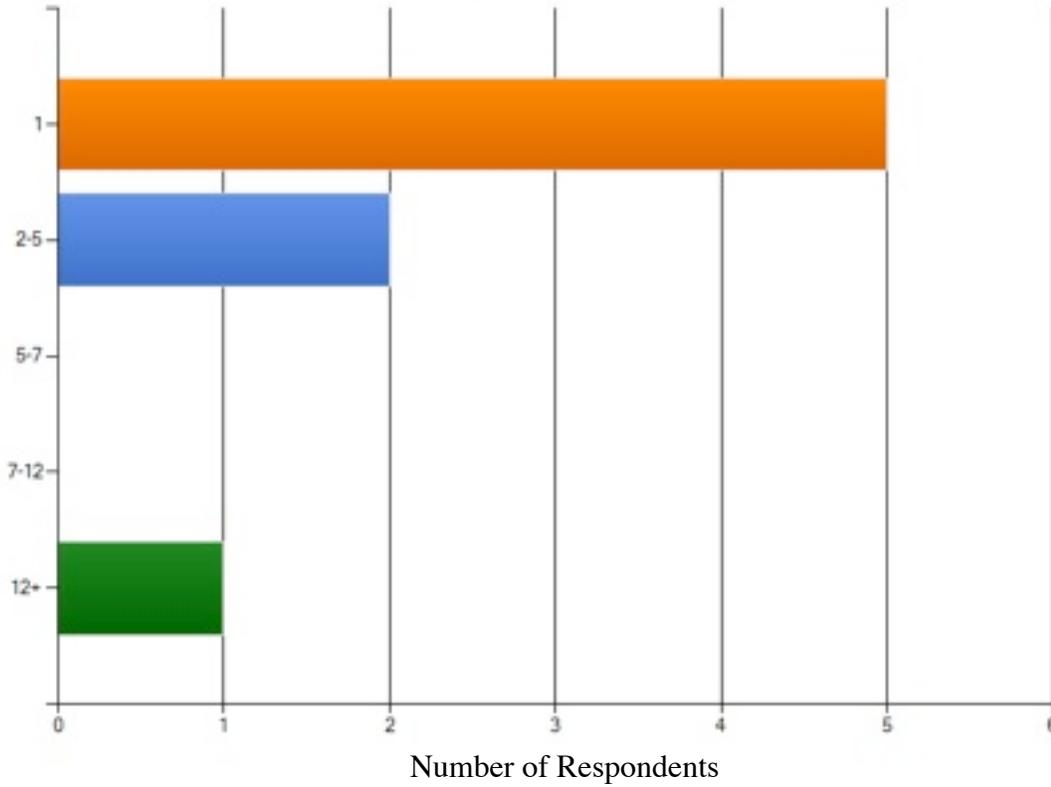


MANAGERIAL SETTING_HORSESHOE BEND_USFS

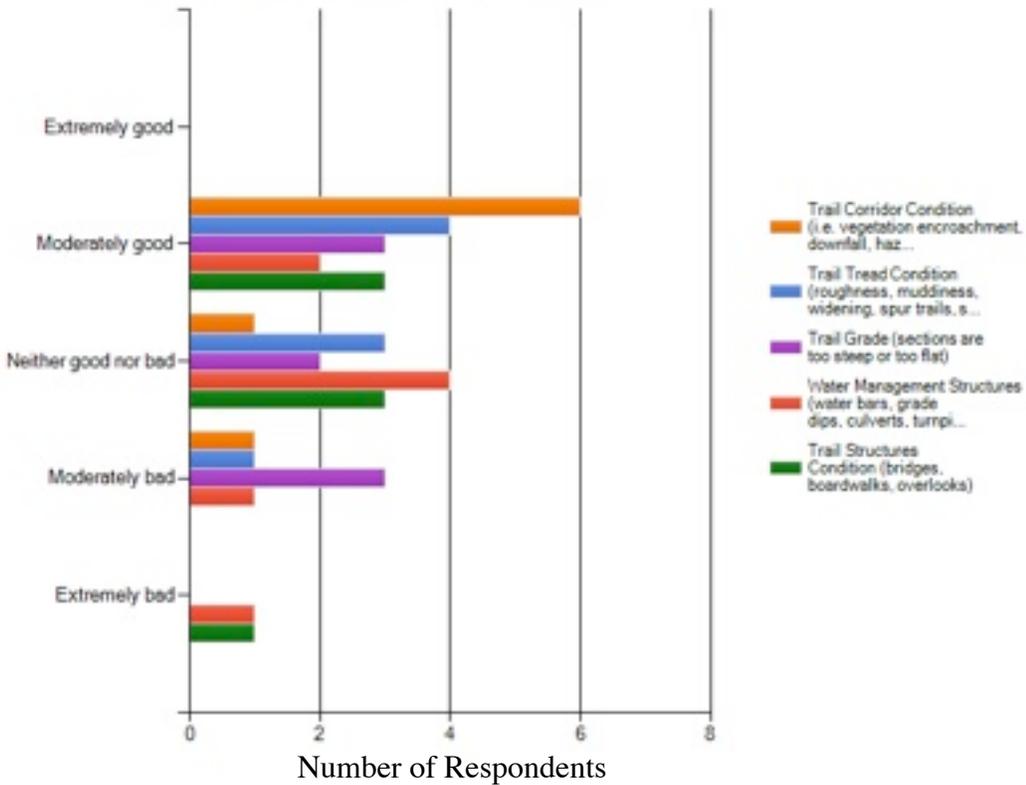


Survey Results: Volunteers

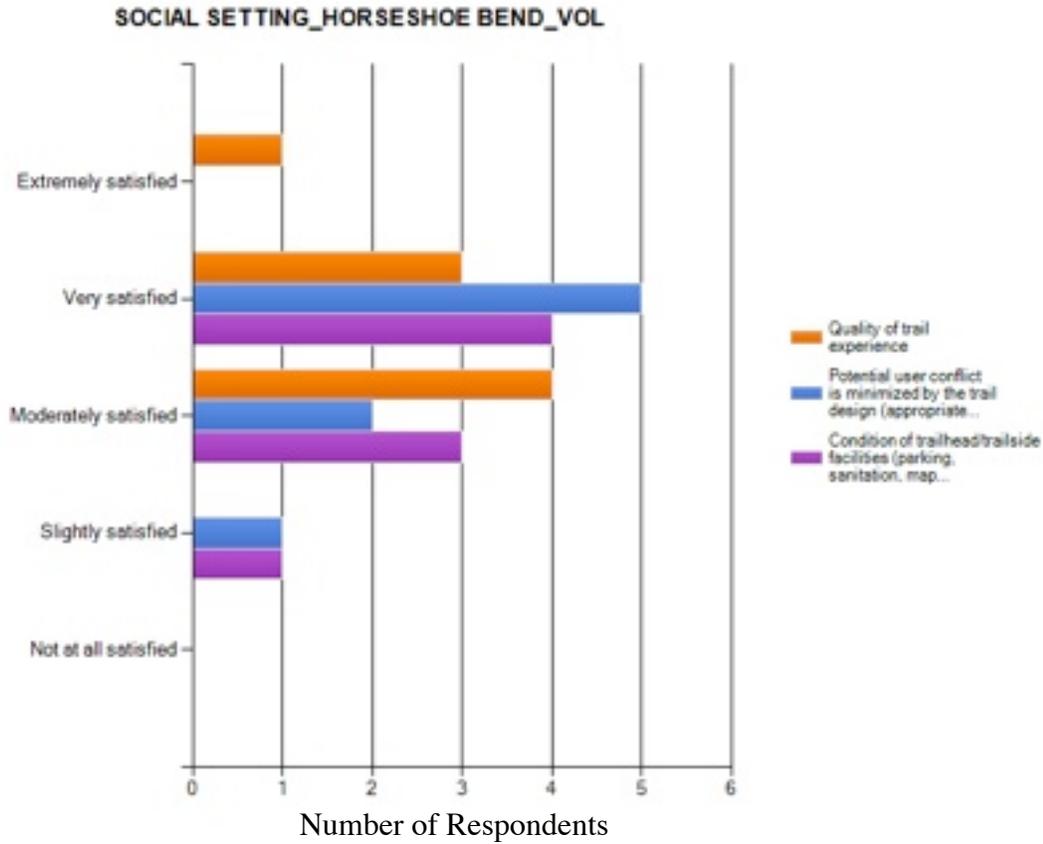
TRAIL USE_HORSESHOE BEND_VOL



PHYSICAL SETTING_HORSESHOE BEND_VOL



Survey Results: Volunteers



Volunteer Group Comments:

Backcountry Horsemen, North Georgia:

While equestrians are permitted on this small section of trail, it is not generally used by horseback riders as there are other longer equestrian trails available in that area of the district with loops that provide a more enjoyable experience.

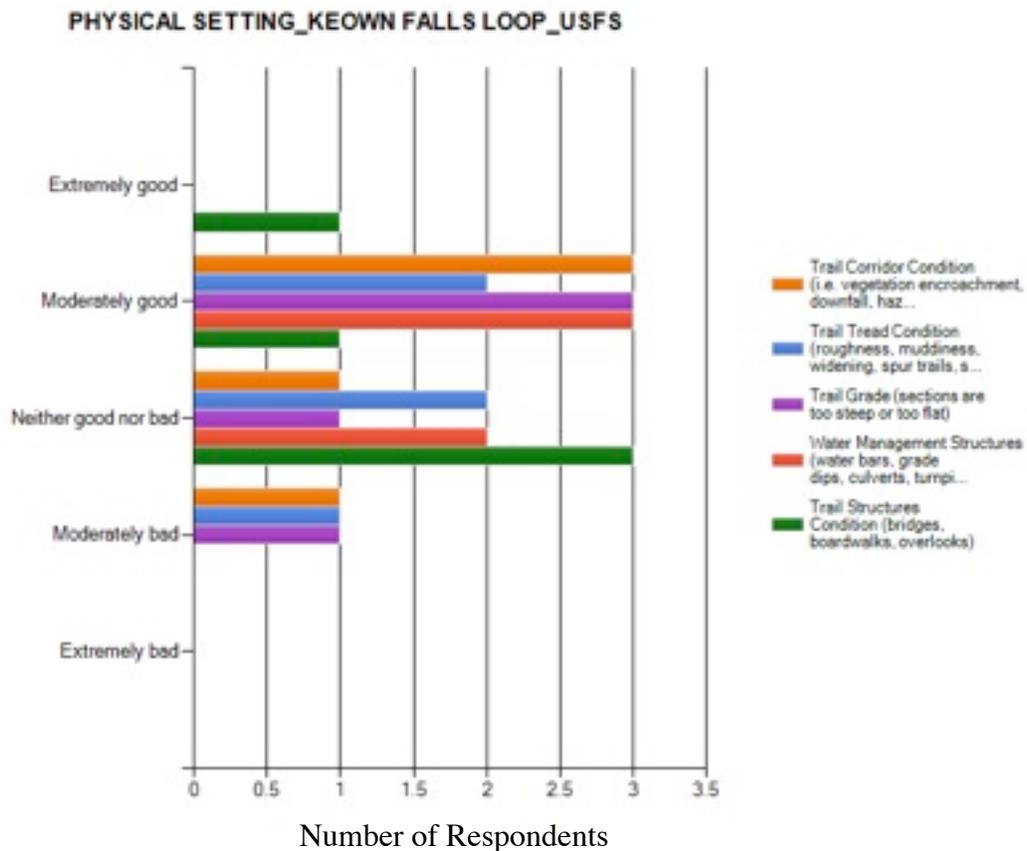
TRAIL: KEOWN FALLS & LOOP

Survey Results: Forest Service

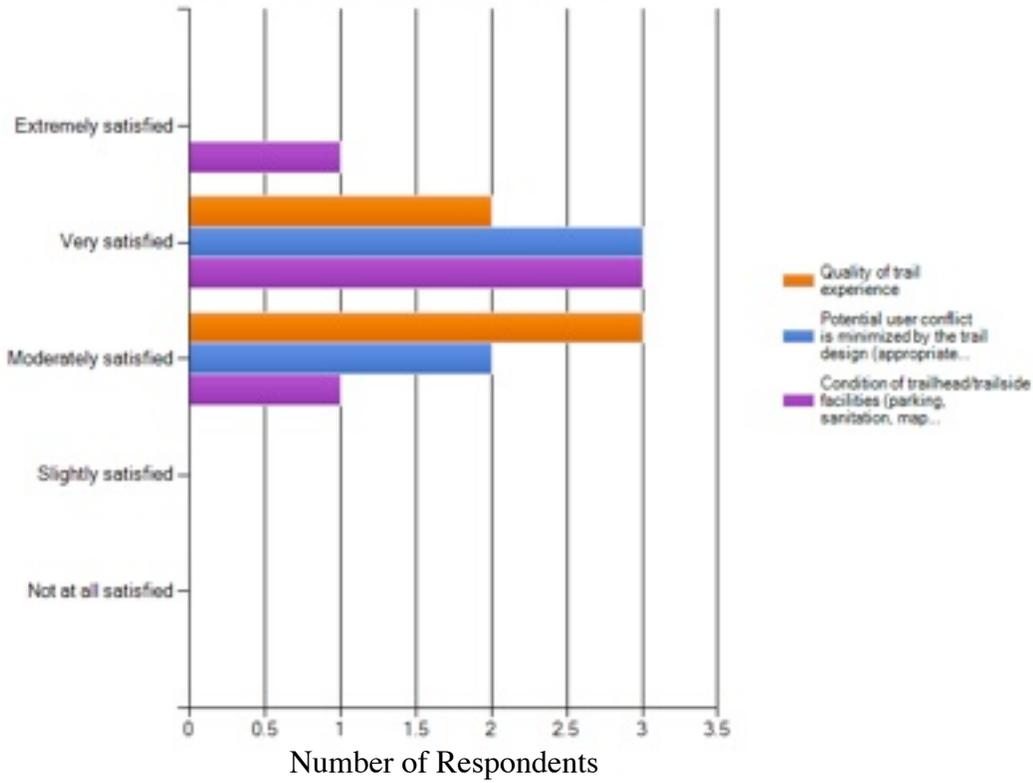
History: None provided.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by FS and Conasauga District Trail Volunteers.

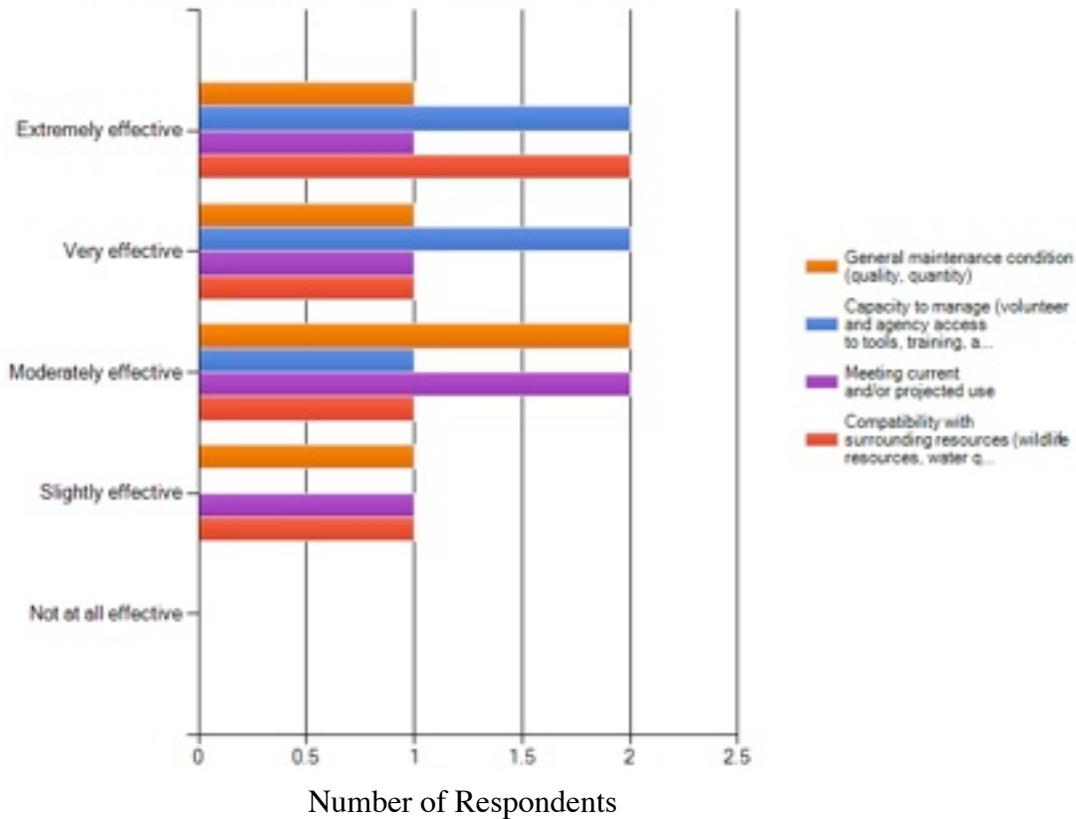
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assessment for sustainability, reroutes, signing, shortcutting big problem.



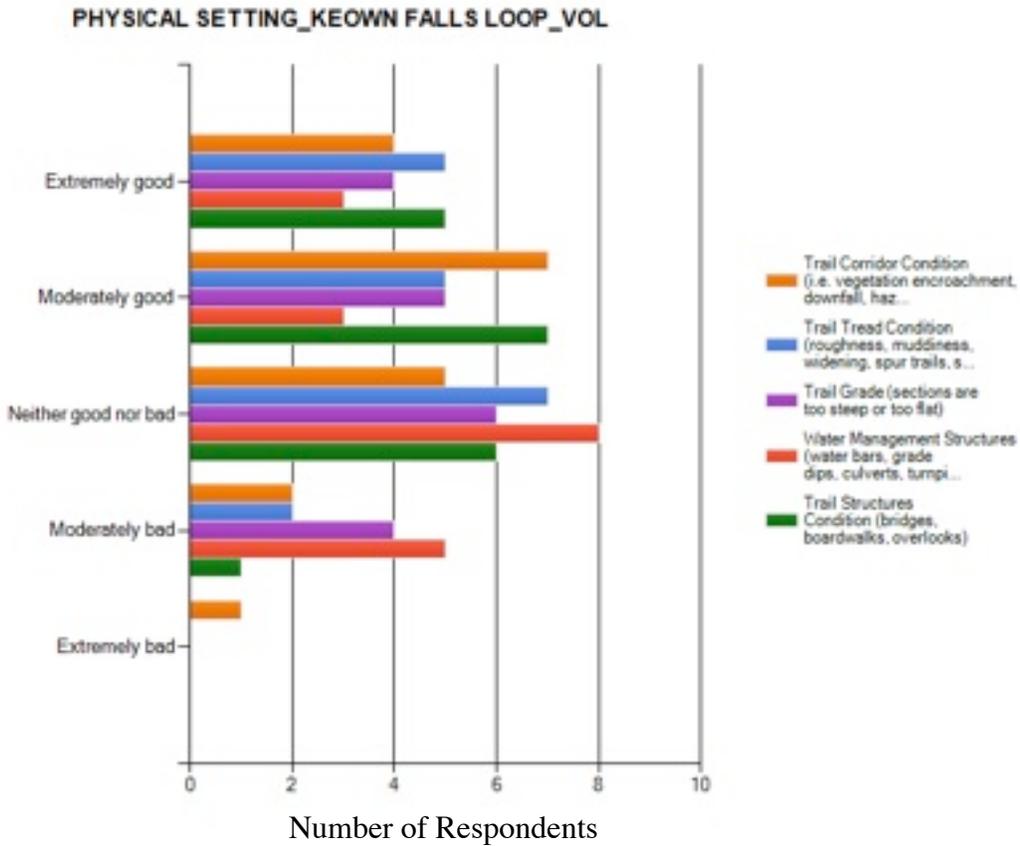
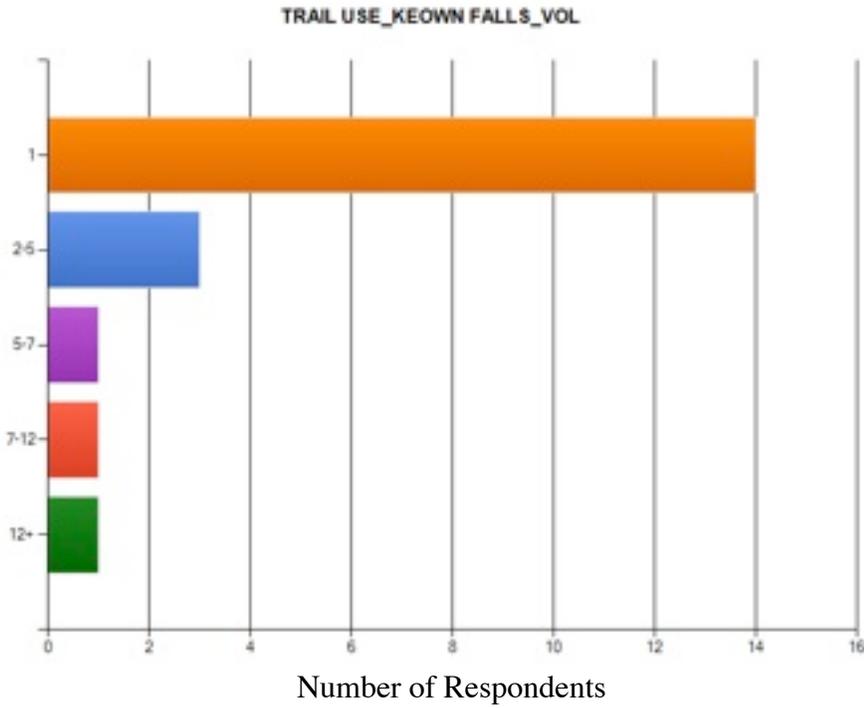
SOCIAL SETTING_KEOWN FALLS LOOP_USFS



MANAGERIAL SETTING_KEOWN FALLS LOOP_USFS

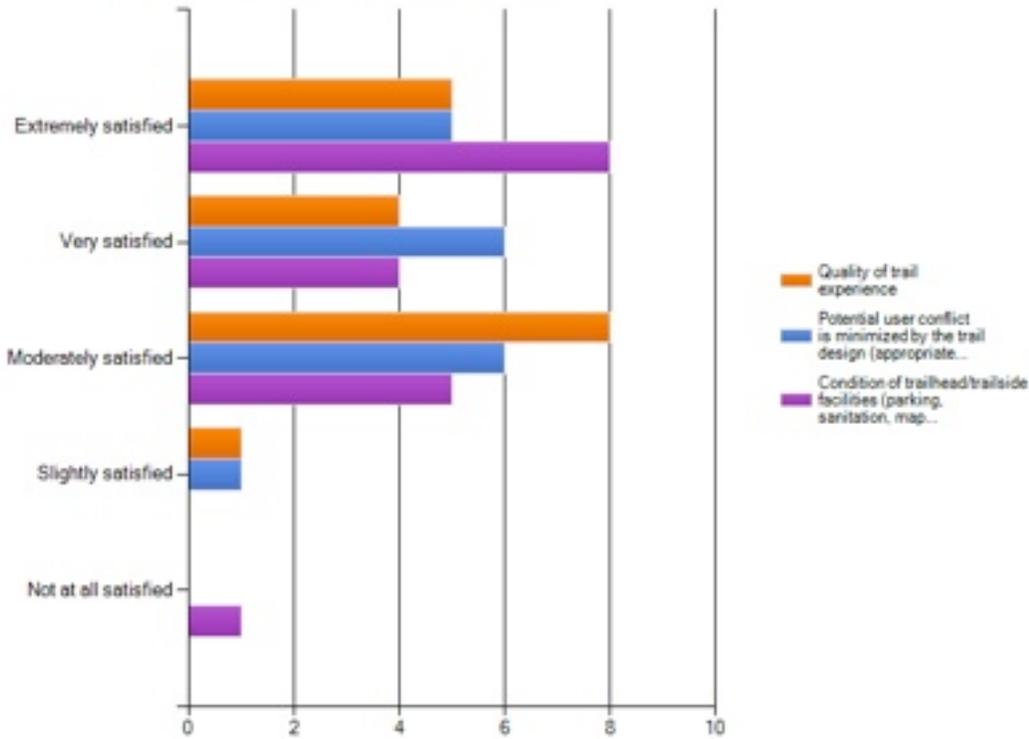


Survey Results: Volunteers



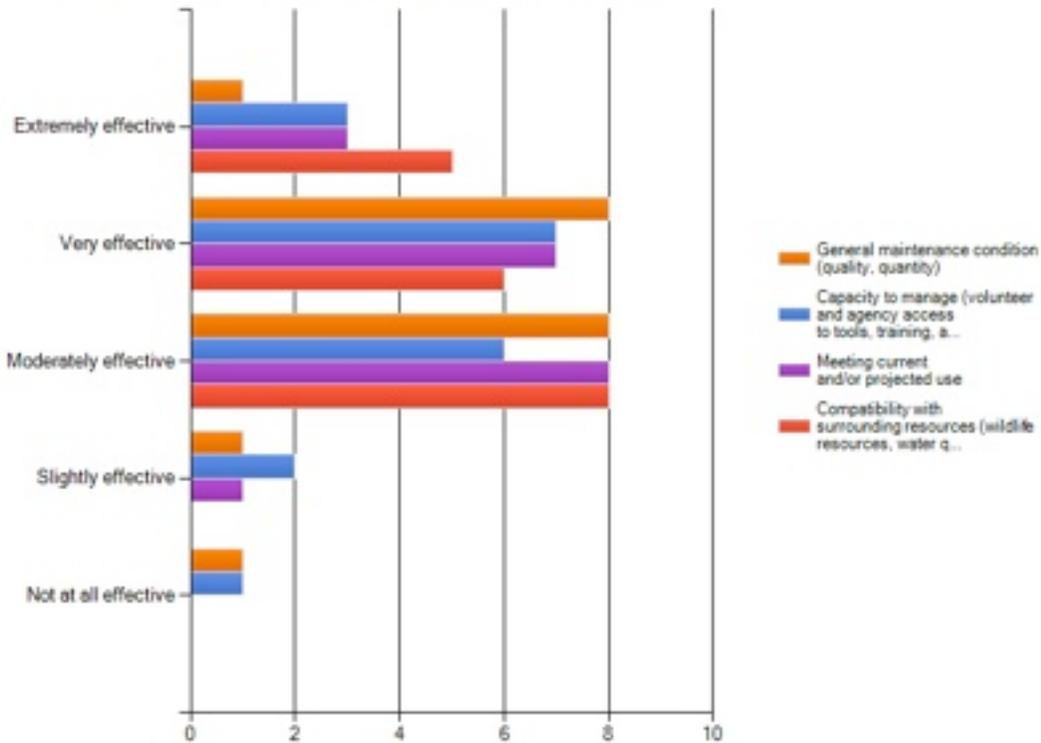
Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_KEOWN FALLS LOOP_VOL



Number of Respondents

MANAGERIAL SETTING_KEOWN FALLS LOOP_VOL



Number of Respondents

Volunteer Group Comments:

Georgia Forest Watch:

History : No particular design but created over the last 100 years by people interested in viewing the waterfall.

Maintenance: No sign of maintenance.

Use: Heavily used trail in the Cohutta Wilderness. Presence of a waterfall is an attraction.

Issues: Difficult to access and difficult to maintain

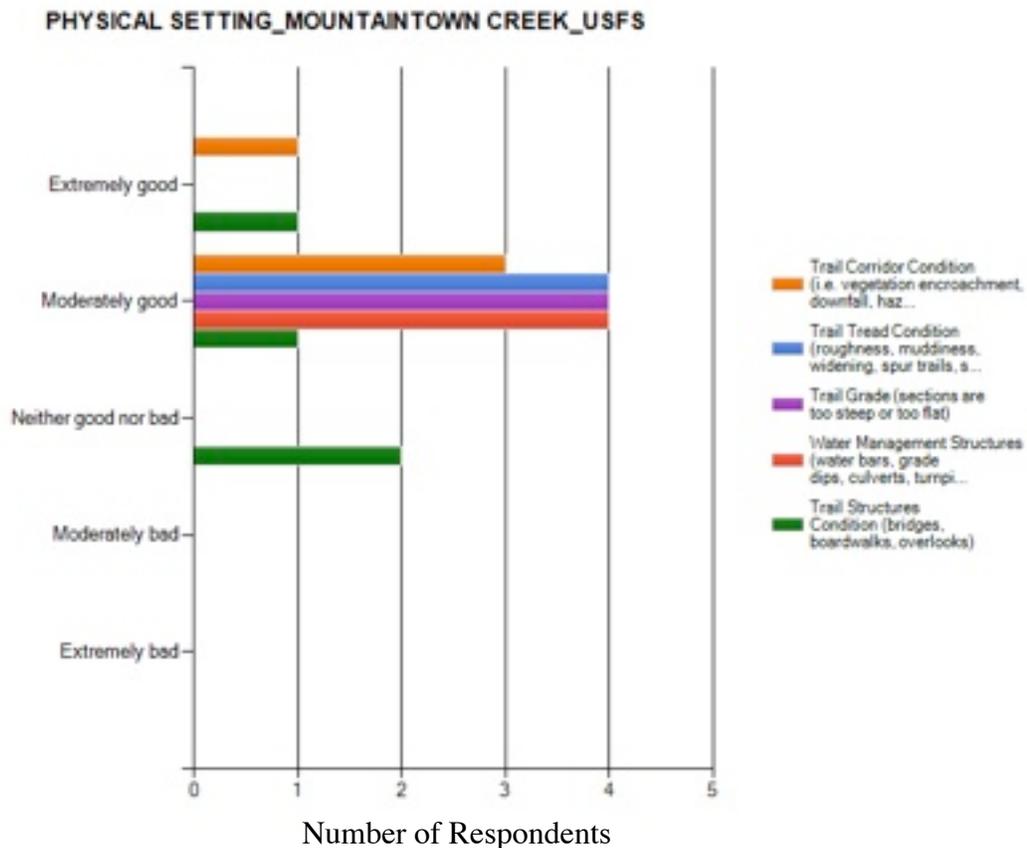
TRAIL: MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK

Survey Results: Forest Service

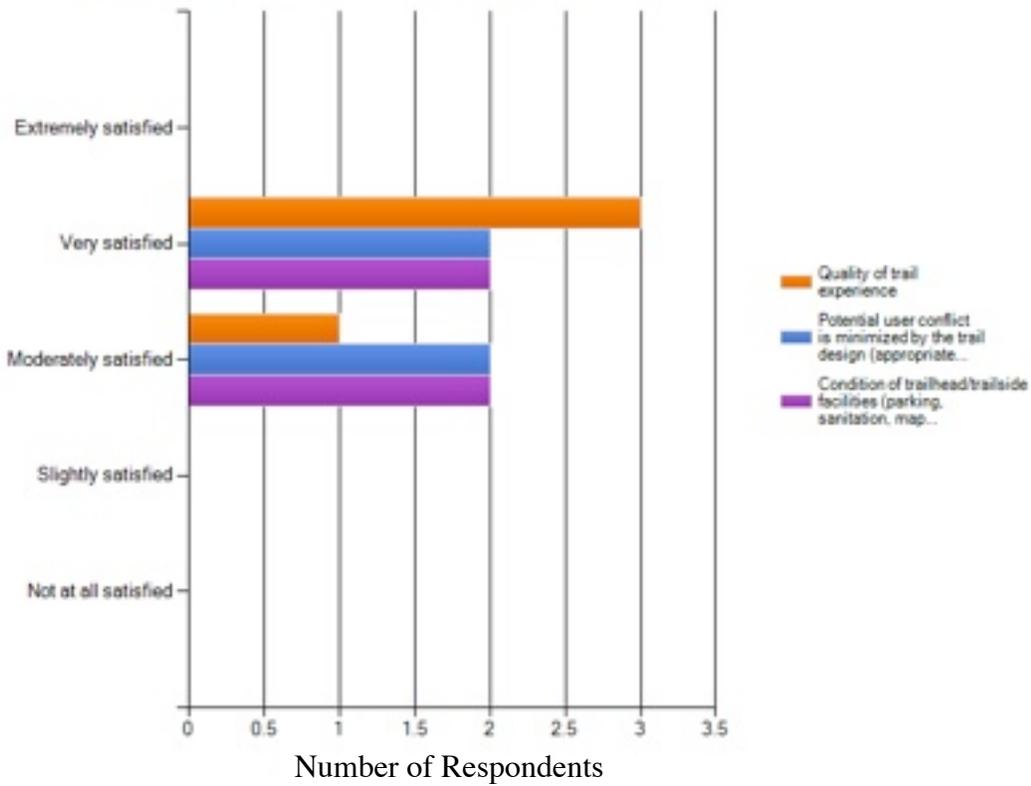
History: Old roadbed. Opened to mountain biking by administrative decision in early 90s.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by EMBA (Ellijay SORBA) and CDTV.

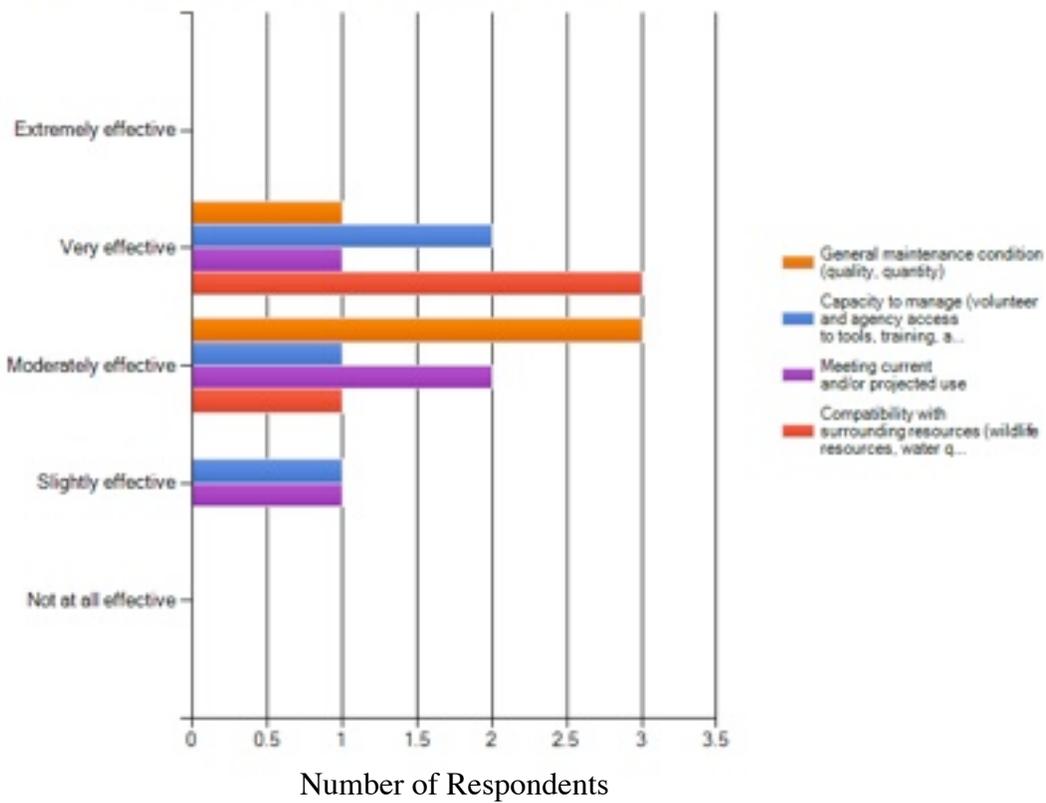
Reasons Included In Assessment: Entire trail needs looked at for sustainability



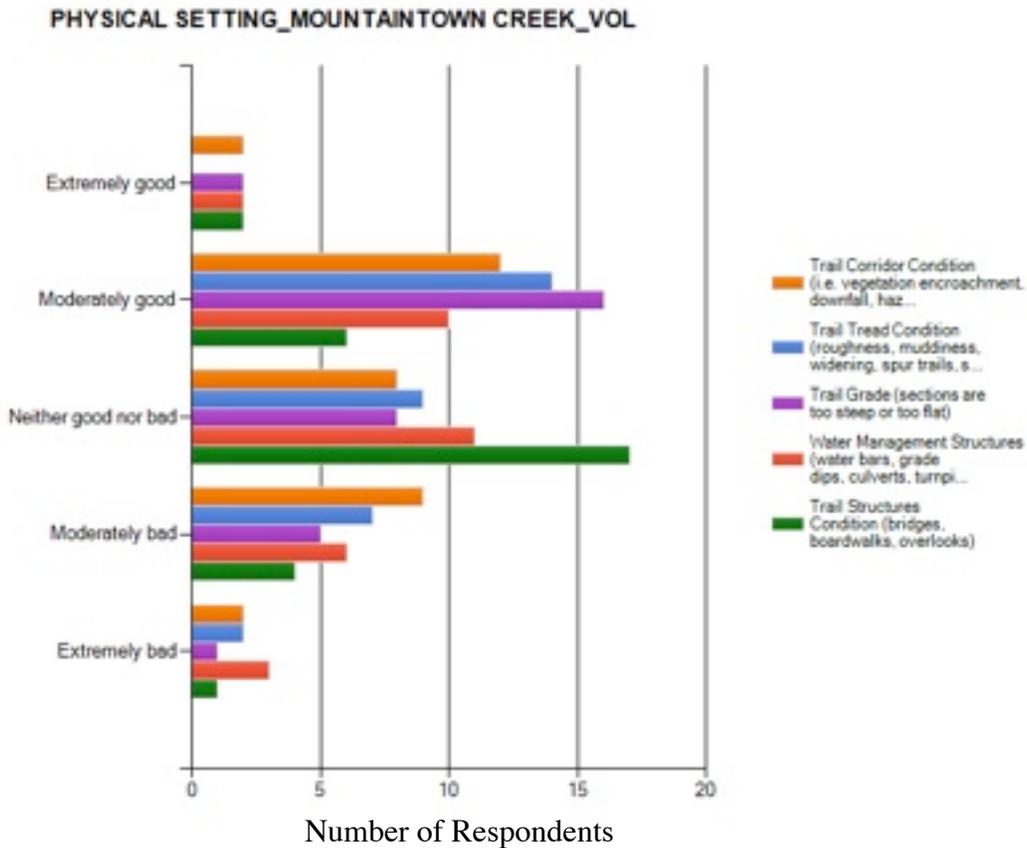
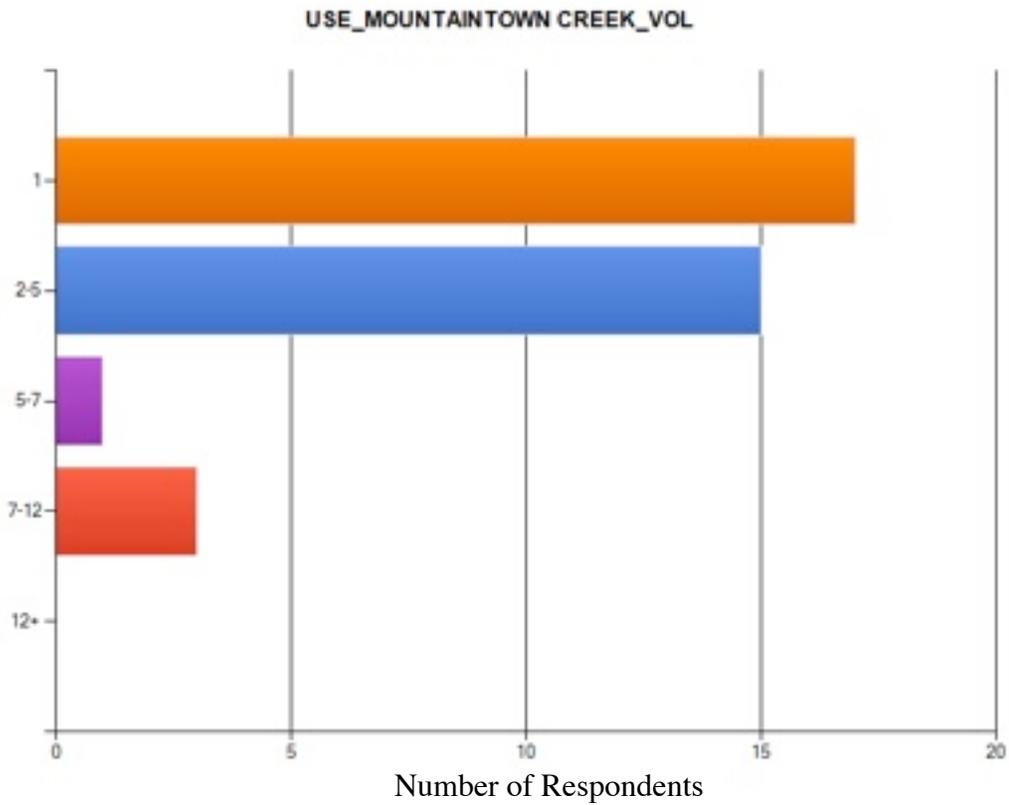
SOCIAL SETTING_MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK_USFS



MANAGERIAL SETTING_MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK_USFS

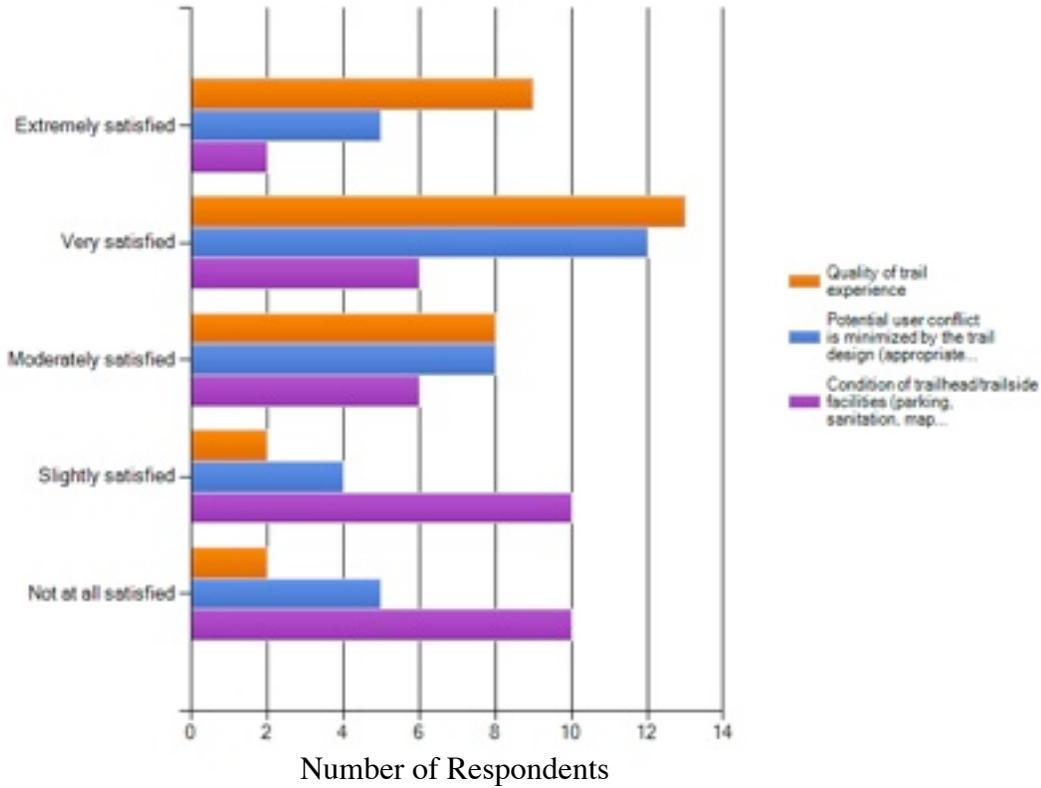


Survey Results: Volunteers

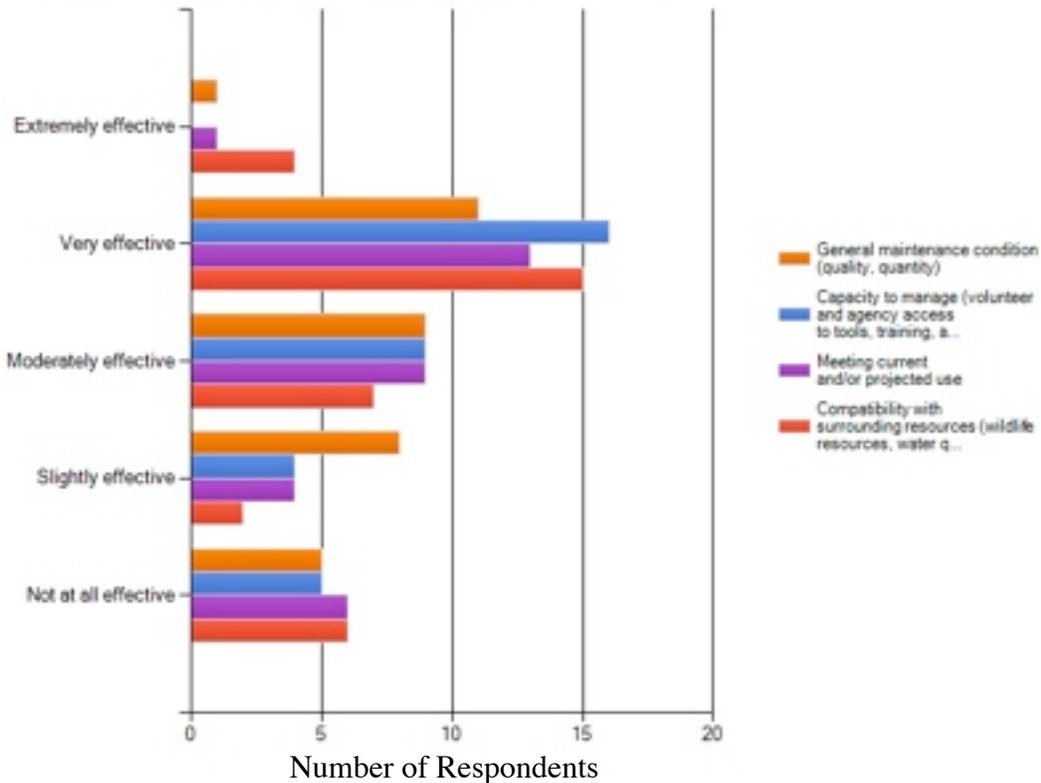


Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK_VOL



MANAGERIAL SETTING_MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK_VOL



Volunteer Group Comments:

Georgia Forest Watch:

History: Trail is on top of an old logging road created with the liberal use of dynamite by the Gennette Lumber Company in the 1920s .

Maintenance: Allegedly maintained occasionally by bikers but the amount of blowdowns testify to its lack of maintenance. Blowdowns left in place serve a useful purpose of slowing bike traffic and this tactic should be employed on other multi-use trails.

Use: Heavily used trail by hikers, anglers and hunters for 50 years.

Issues: Designated also for bikes but too steep with limited sight distance and with too many deep fords to be appropriate for bikes. Trail corridor is dictated by steep gorge and makes any attempt to lessen grade impossible.

IMBA/SORBA:

History: Mountaintown Creek Trail was opened to mountain biking in the early 1990s. It enjoyed steady mtb traffic, and SORBA held lots of work parties for maintenance. SORBA is still active on this trail, has a good relationship with the Forest Service regarding this trail, and we consider it one of the gems of the Conasauga District.

Maintenance: Used to provide regular maintenance, until the current controversy over the trail's egress put the future of the trail in question. SORBA would hold annual work parties, attend by 30 or more volunteers. The local chapter, Ellijay Mountain Biking Association, removed logs as needed, generally on a monthly basis. The large work parties were ended because of the controversy, but SORBA has still performed work parties when requested by the FS. The last work party was held about 3 or 4 years ago, and 30+ volunteers lopped and cleared brush from the entire trail corridor.

Use: Mountaintown Creek is a much-loved mountain biking trail, a favorite for riders seeking a backcountry, challenging experience. It is ridden year-round, perhaps, more in warmer months due to creek crossings. Riding has dropped off since the controversy, as SORBA adopted a policy not to hold organized rides on the trail. Individuals still ride the trail, and it continues to be a favorite destination. The FS has told us the trail is NOT closed, and local homeowners have told us that they don't mind us using their road for exiting the trail. Steep sections, creek crossings, and remoteness qualify this as an advanced-rider trail.

Issues: SORBA is well aware of Georgia Forest Watch's organized campaign to have this trail closed to mountain bikes. The FS has offered a plan that would end the problem of exiting the trail on private land. SORBA has been involved in the plan process, attending public meeting, a public hike, and providing written input in support of keeping the trail open to bikes. We support the FS Action Plan as summarized in the MOUNTAINTOWN CREEK TRAIL ACCESS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT. This plan would: 1. Construct a 1.5-mile angler access trail to provide foot access to lower Mountaintown Creek. Use the existing Bear Creek parking area as a trailhead. 2. Route mountain bike riders and hikers traveling down the Mountaintown Creek Trail onto the Pinhoti Trail to provide them with a through-trail opportunity. Change the management of this 1.5-mile section of the Pinhoti trail from "hiking only" to "hiking and mountain biking". 3. Relocate about 0.6 miles of the Pinhoti Trail. Move the trail off of an old roadbed and onto a sideslope that is farther away from a perennial stream. Rehabilitate and close the old roadbed and construct the new trail section to a design standard suitable for mountain biking. 4. Change the management of a 1.7-mile section of the Mountaintown Creek Trail downstream from its intersection with the Pinhoti Trail from "hiking and mountain biking" to "hiking only".

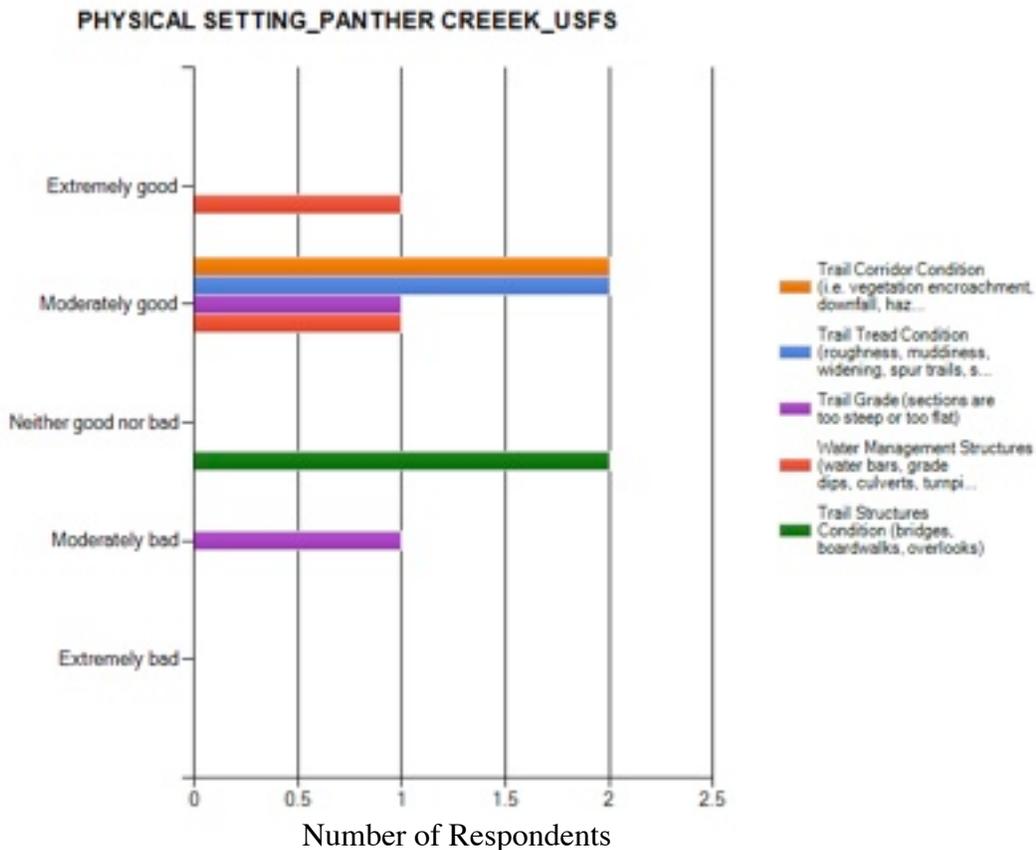
TRAIL: PANTHER CREEK

Survey Results: Forest Service

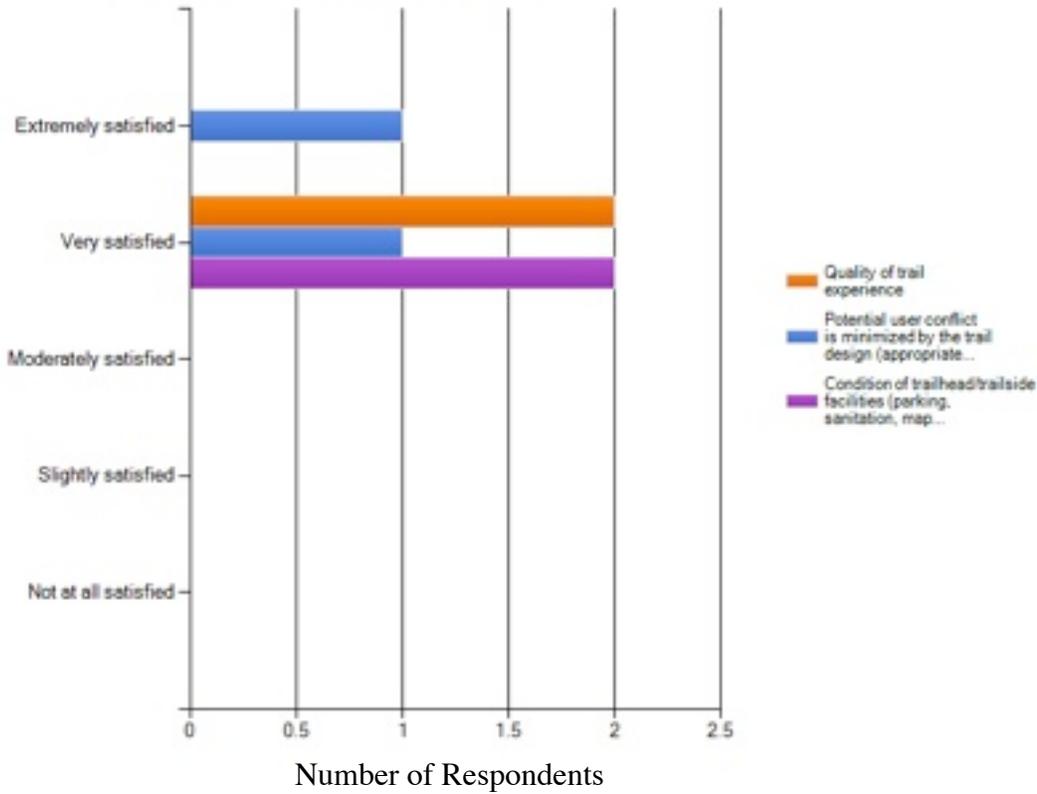
History: Original Wilderness trail from 1975.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by Team Conasauga (CDTV) volunteers.

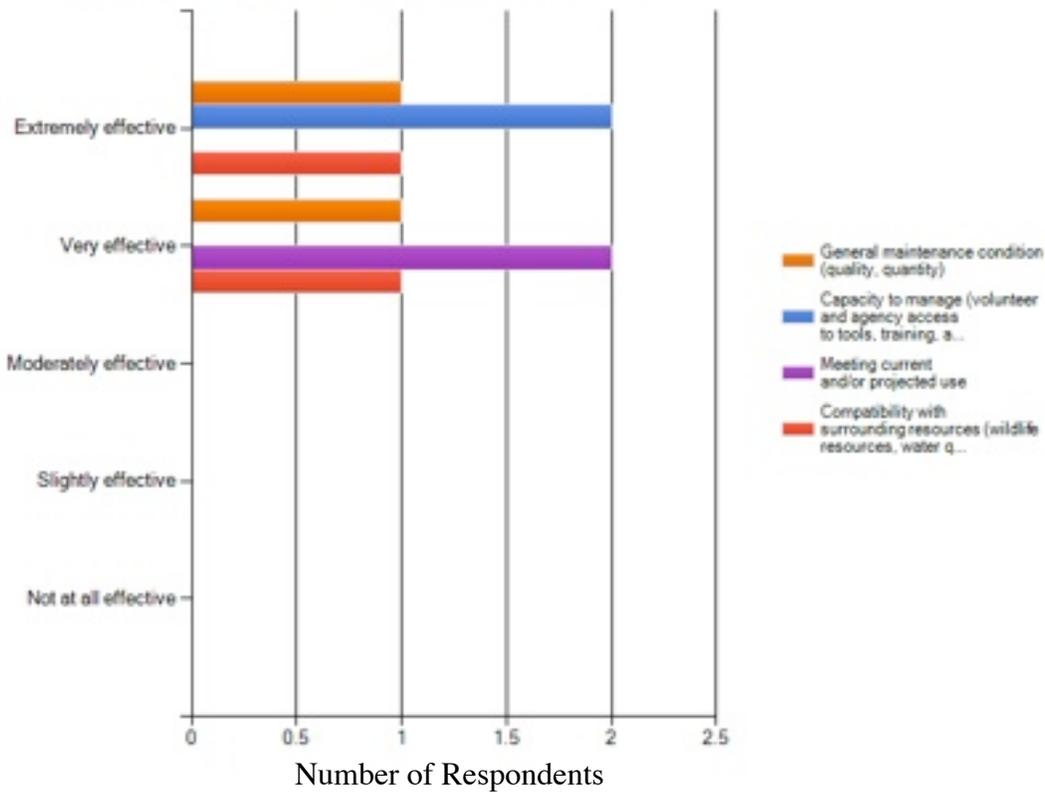
Reasons Included In Assessment: Needs reroute east from Panther Creek



SOCIAL SETTING_PANTHER CREEK_USFS

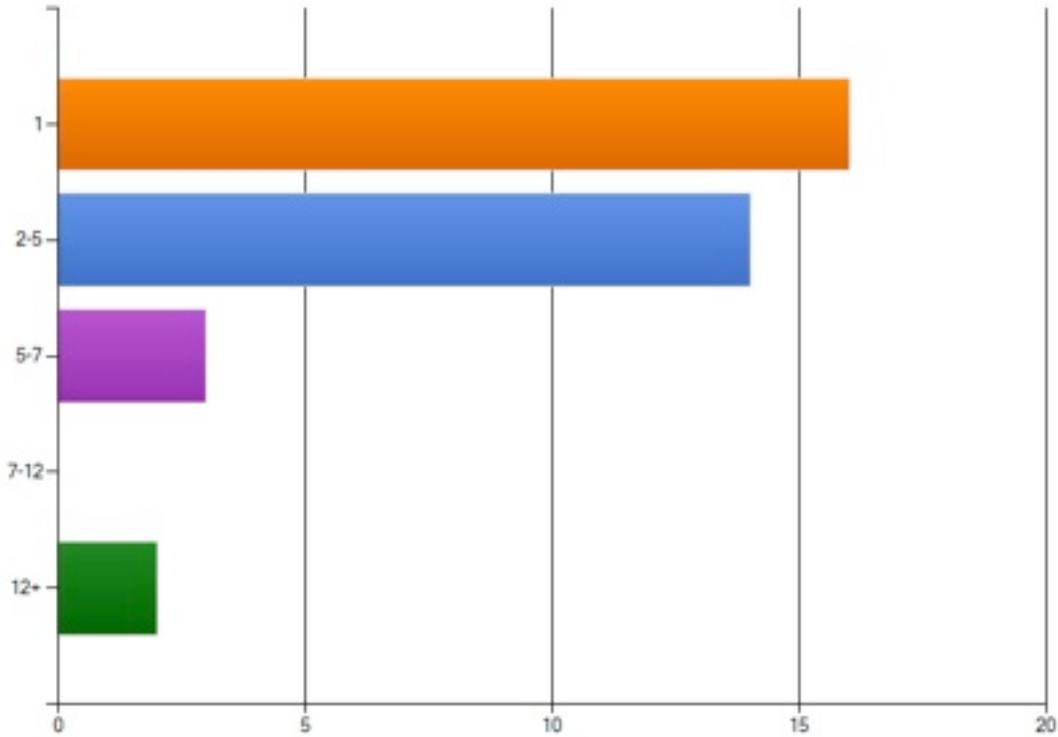


MANAGERIAL SETTING_PANTHER CREEK_USFS



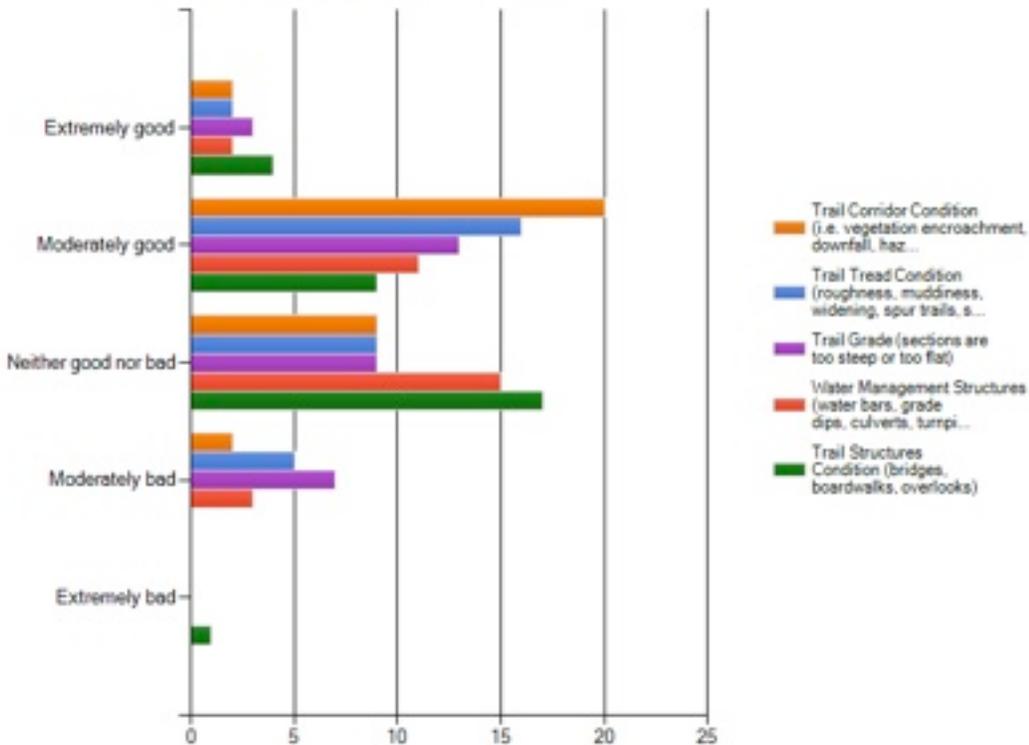
Survey Results: Volunteers

TRAIL USE_PANTHER CREEK_VOL



Number of Respondents

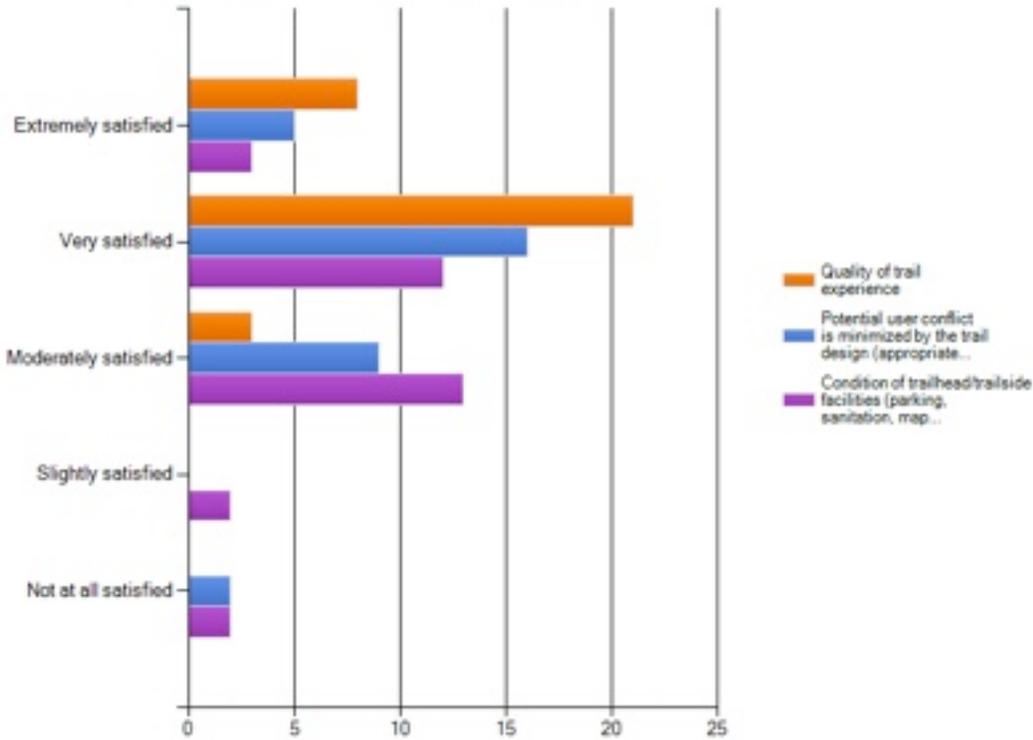
PHYSICAL SETTING_PANTHER CREEK_VOL



Number of Respondents

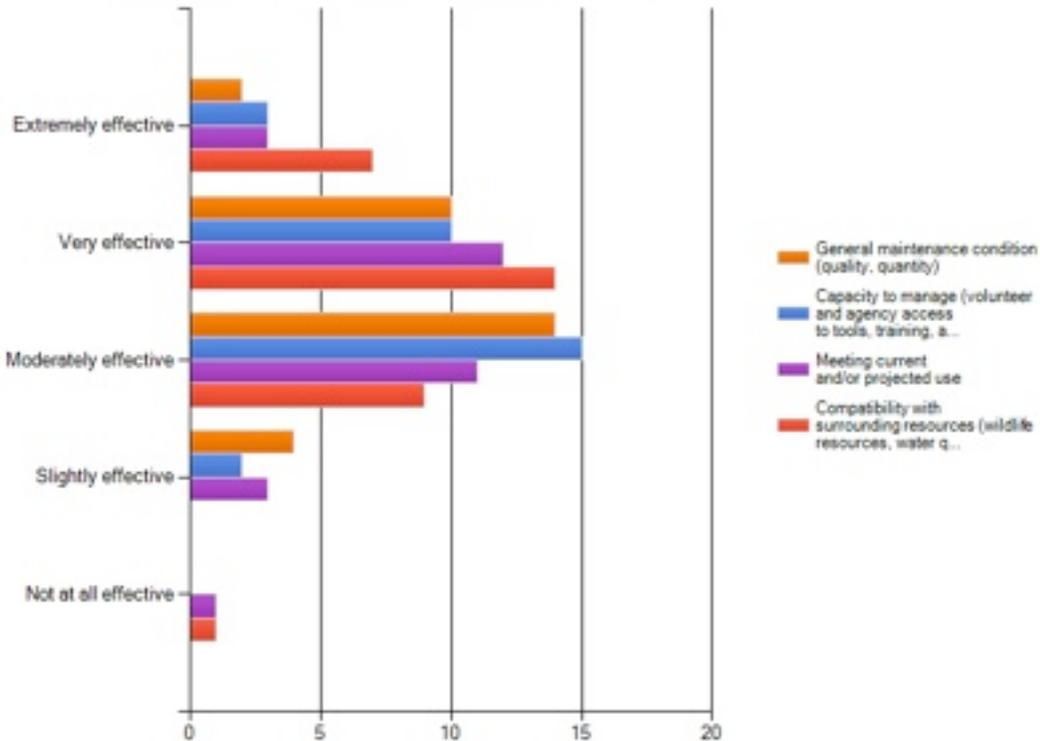
Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_PANTHER CREEK_VOL



Number of Respondents

MANAGERIAL SETTING_PANTHER CREEK_VOL



Number of Respondents

Volunteer Group Comments:

Georgia Forest Watch:

History : No particular design but created over the last 100 years by people interested in viewing the waterfall.

Maintenance: No sign of maintenance.

Use: Heavily used trail in the Cohutta Wilderness. Presence of a waterfall is an attraction.

Issues: Difficult to access and difficult to maintain

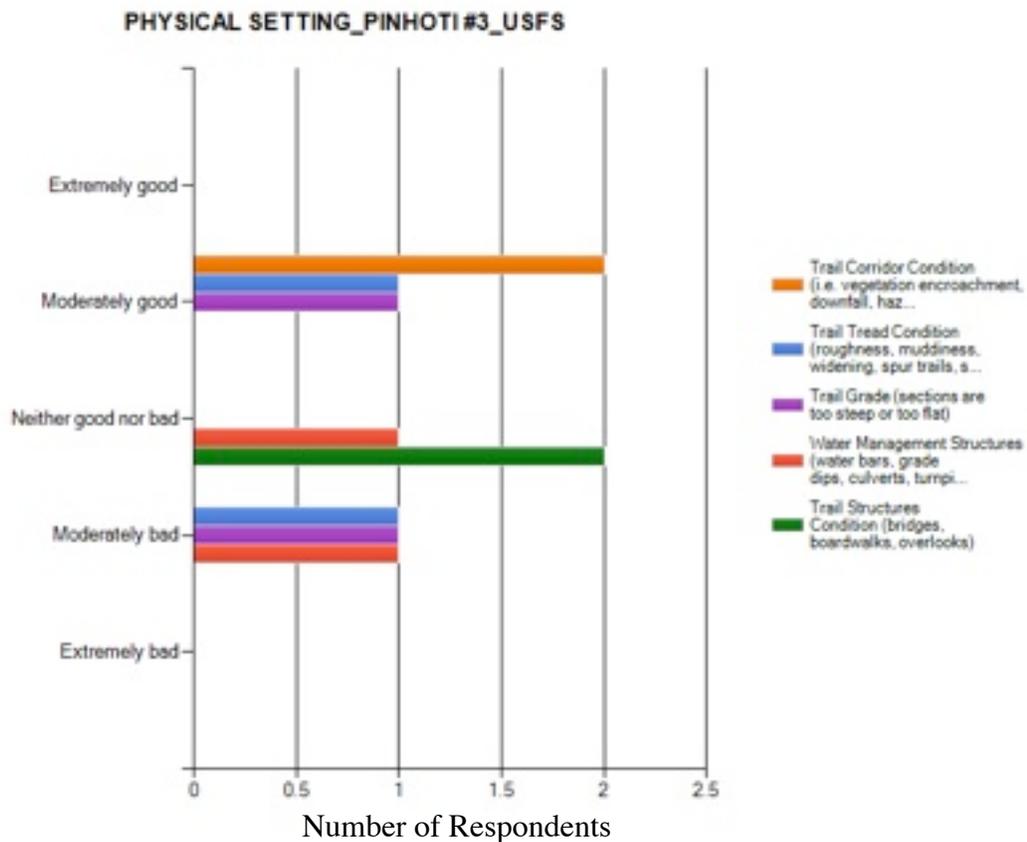
TRAIL: PINHOTI

Survey Results: Forest Service

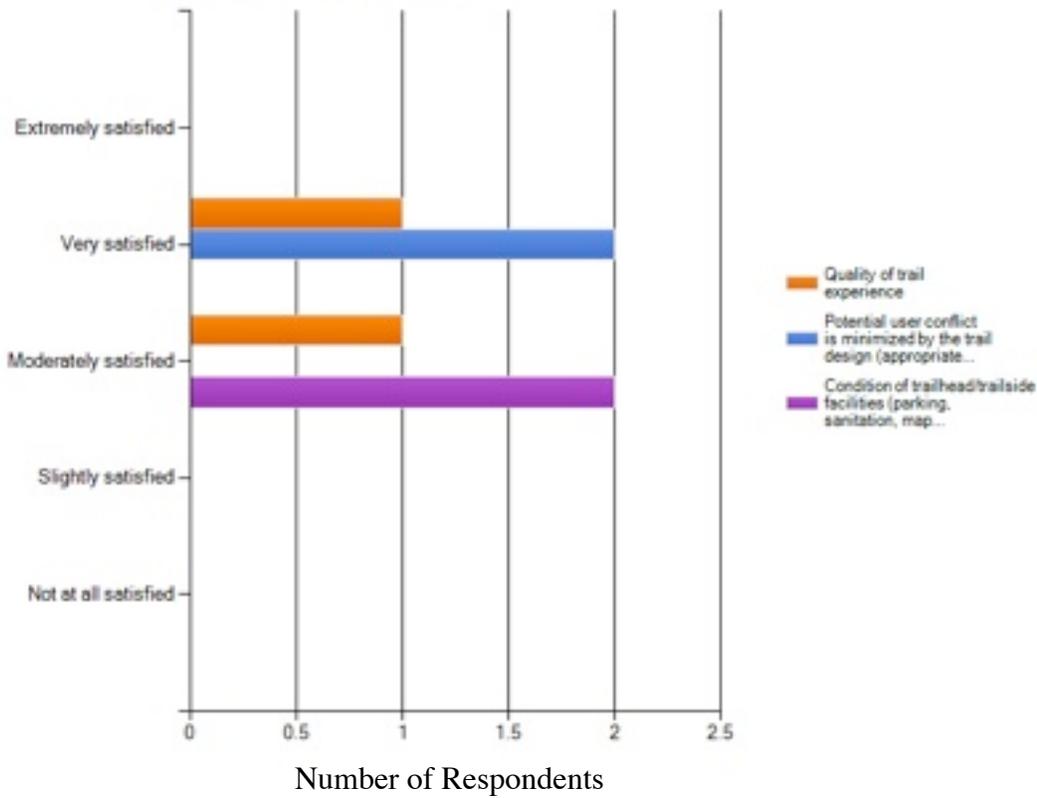
History: Various sections. Built in late 90s by FS.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by SORBA (NWGA), BCHNWGA, CDTV, FS.

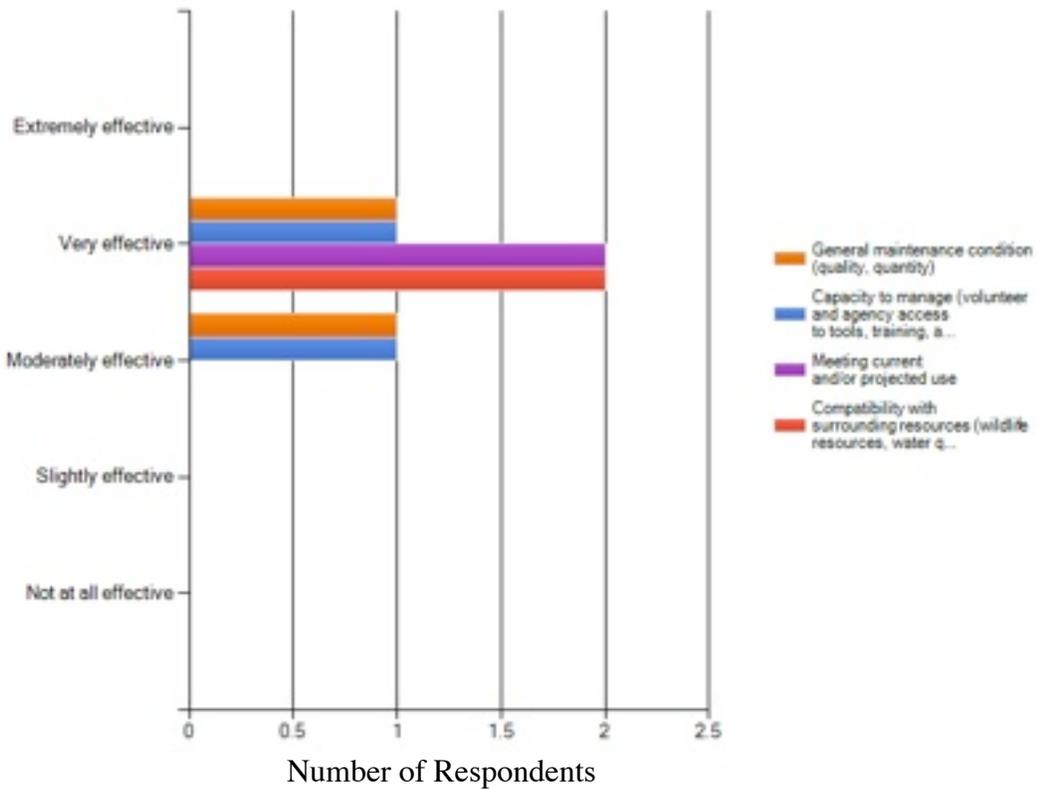
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assessment for reroutes of steep sections.



SOCIAL SETTING_PINHOTI #3_USFS

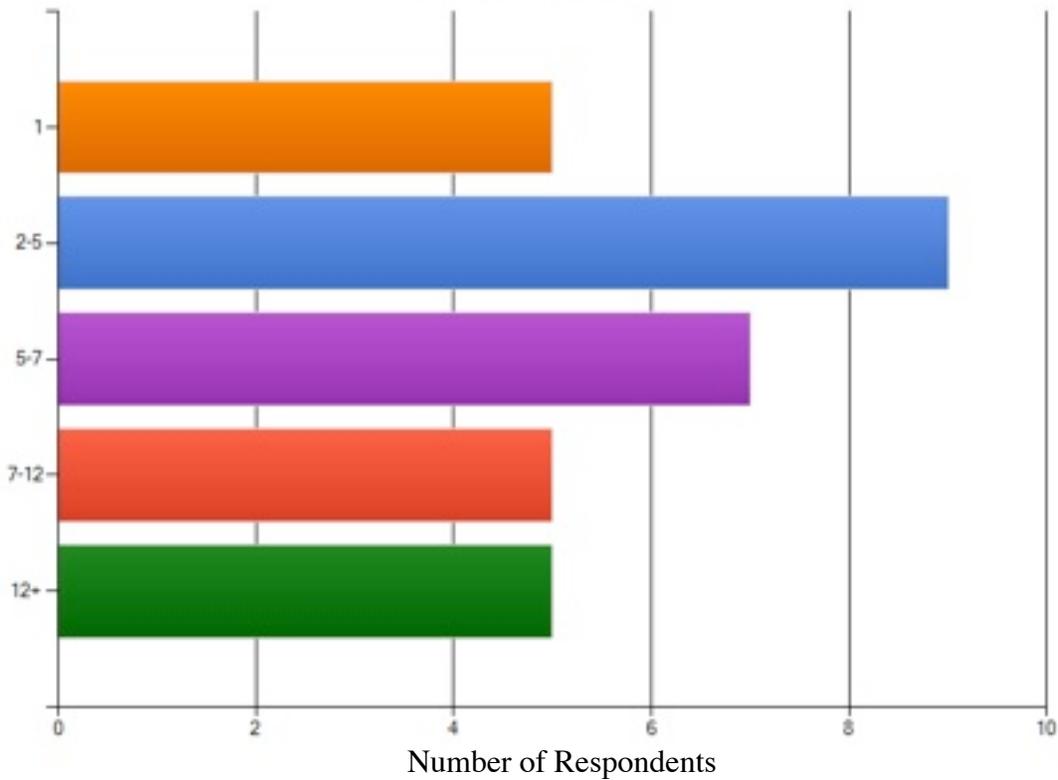


MANAGERIAL SETTING_PINHOTI #3_USFS

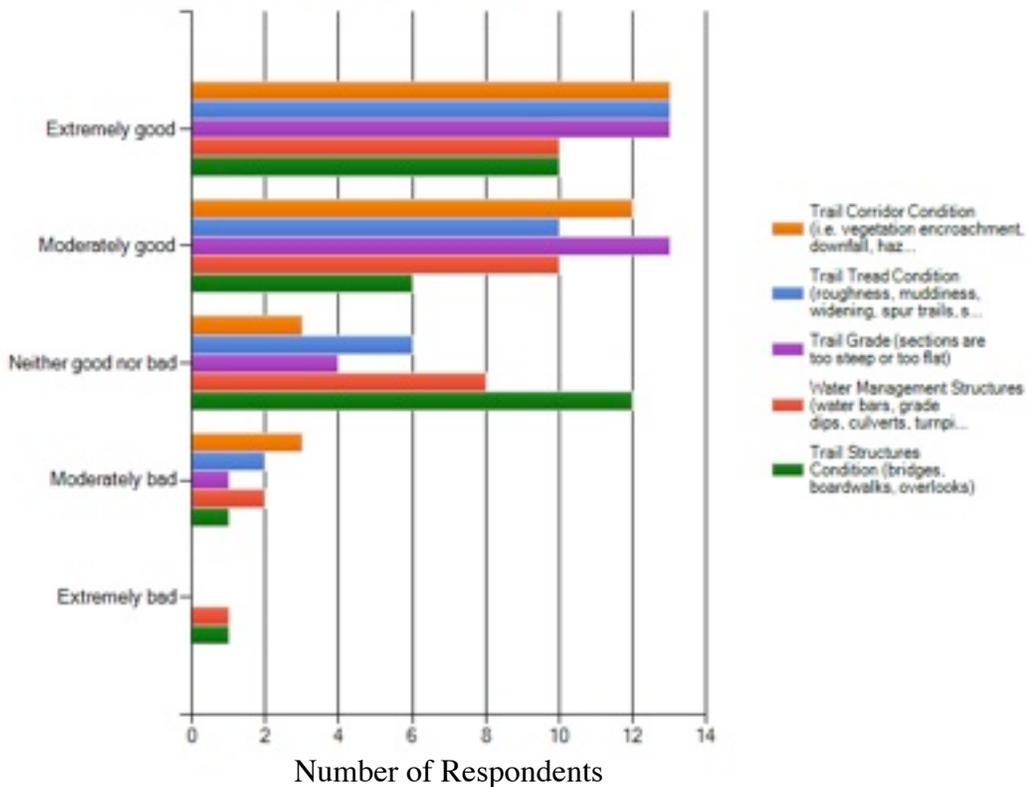


Survey Results: Volunteers

TRAIL USE_PINHOTI_VOL

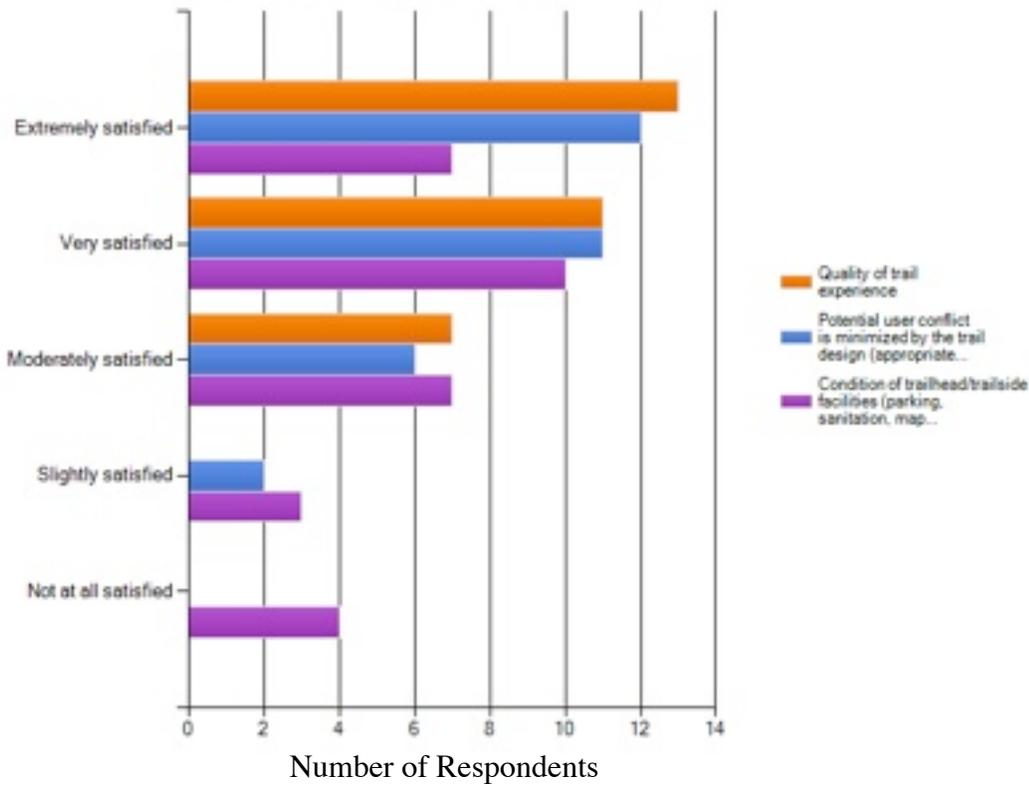


PHYSICAL SETTING_PINHOTI #3_VOL

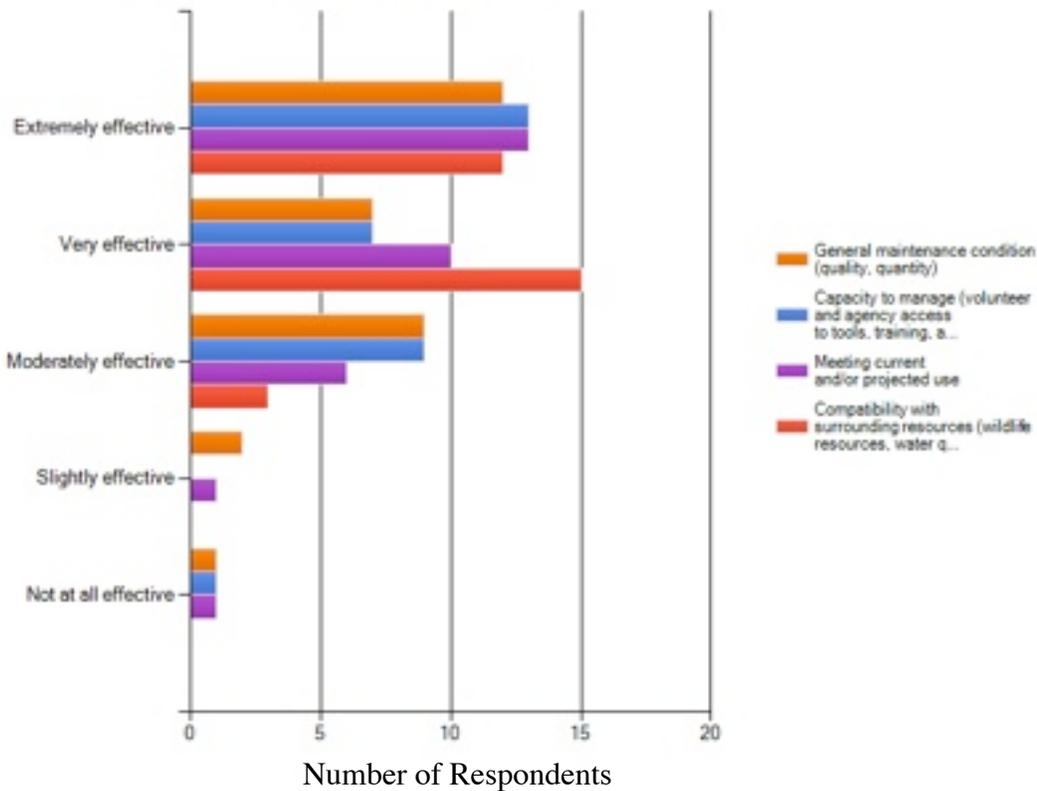


Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_PINHOTI #3_VOL



MANAGERIAL SETTING_PINHOTI #3_VOL



Volunteer Group Comments:

IMBA/SORBA:

History: Built by the Pinhoti Trail Association. Not sure when it opened. A very favorite mountain biking trail. Very scenic, steep and challenging.

Maintenance: SORBA has cleared trees as needed, and performed work as requested by the Forest Service.

Use: I can't recall seeing hikers on this trail. This trail is one of the gems of the Cohuttas for mountain biking.

Cannot say enough about how great this trail is!

Issues: None

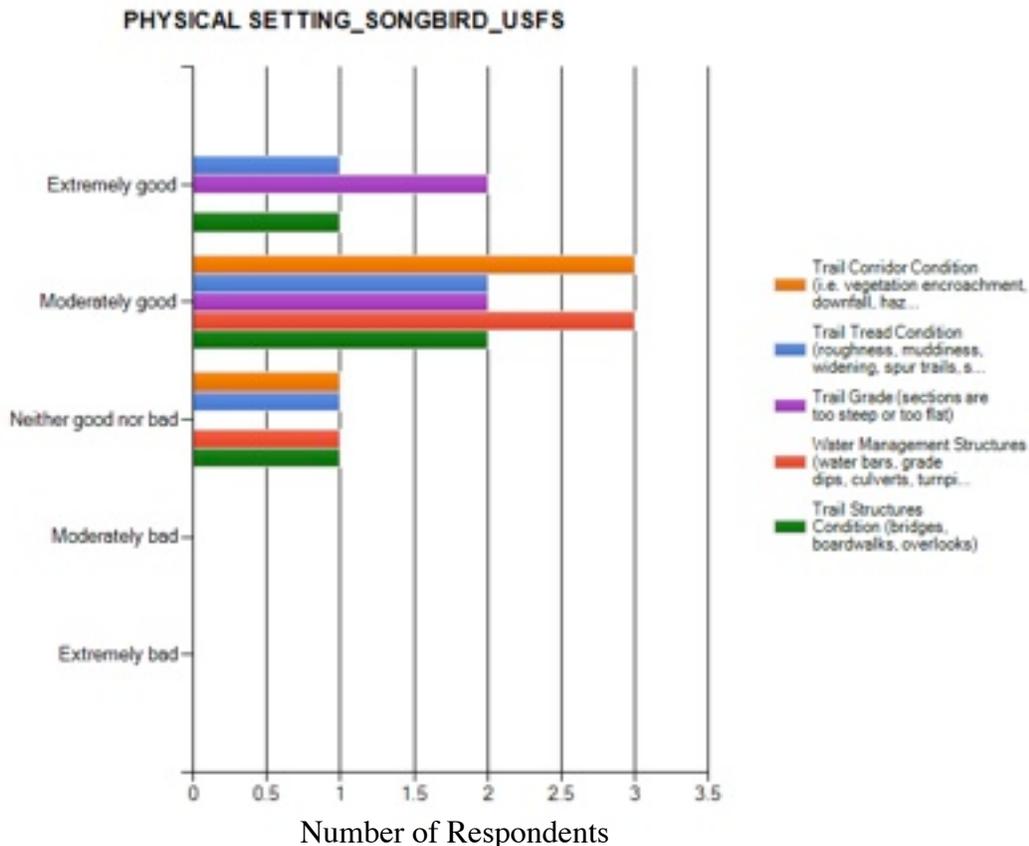
TRAIL: SONGBIRD

Survey Results: Forest Service

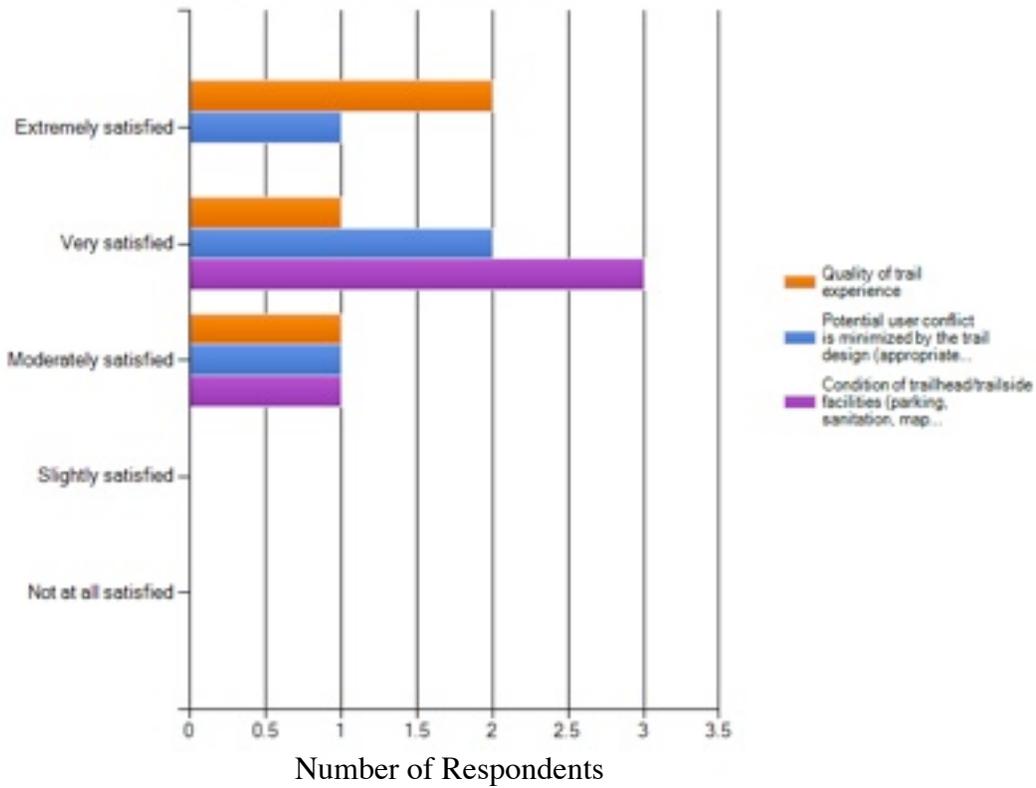
History: Trail created in early 90s using a leg of Tower Trail to complete loop. Deck, bridges built by USFS under Force Account.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained primarily by FS with occasional volunteer assistance when requested.

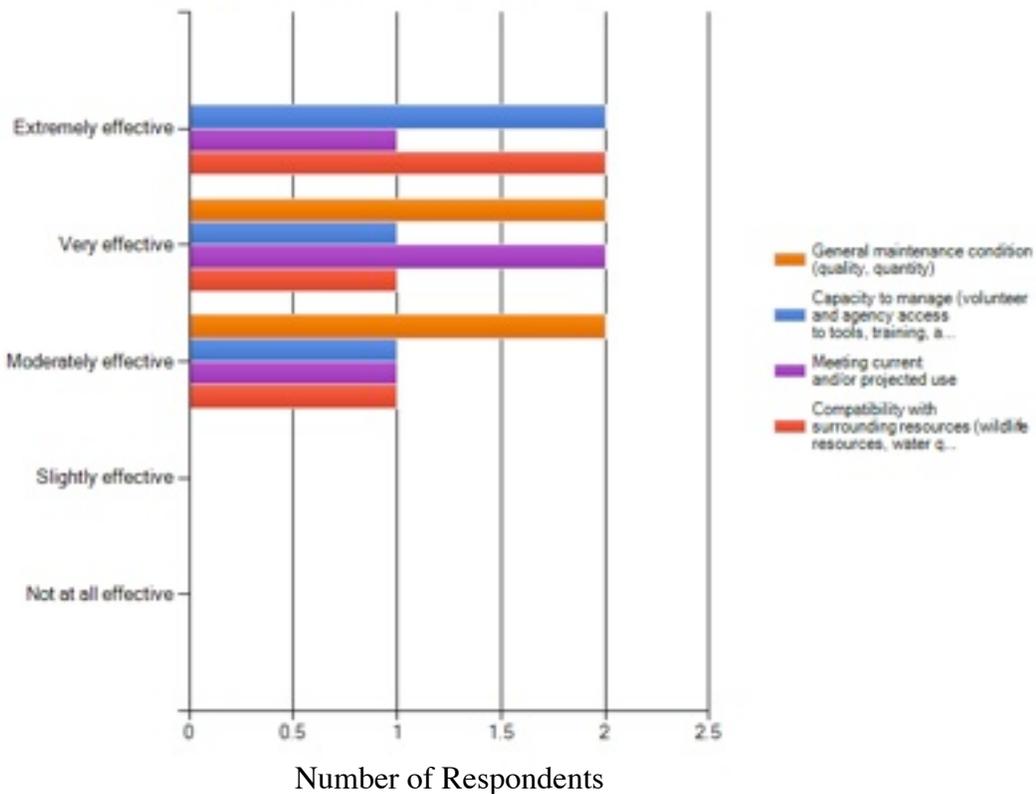
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assessment to look at trail structures.



SOCIAL SETTING_SONGBIRD_USFS

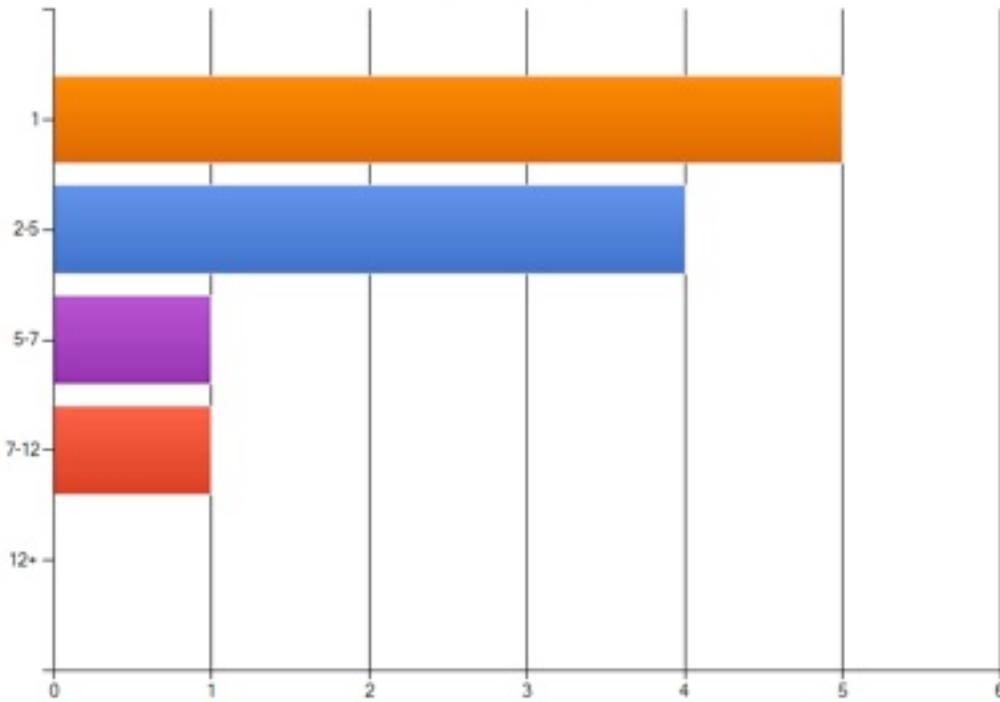


MANAGERIAL SETTING_SONGBIRD_USFS



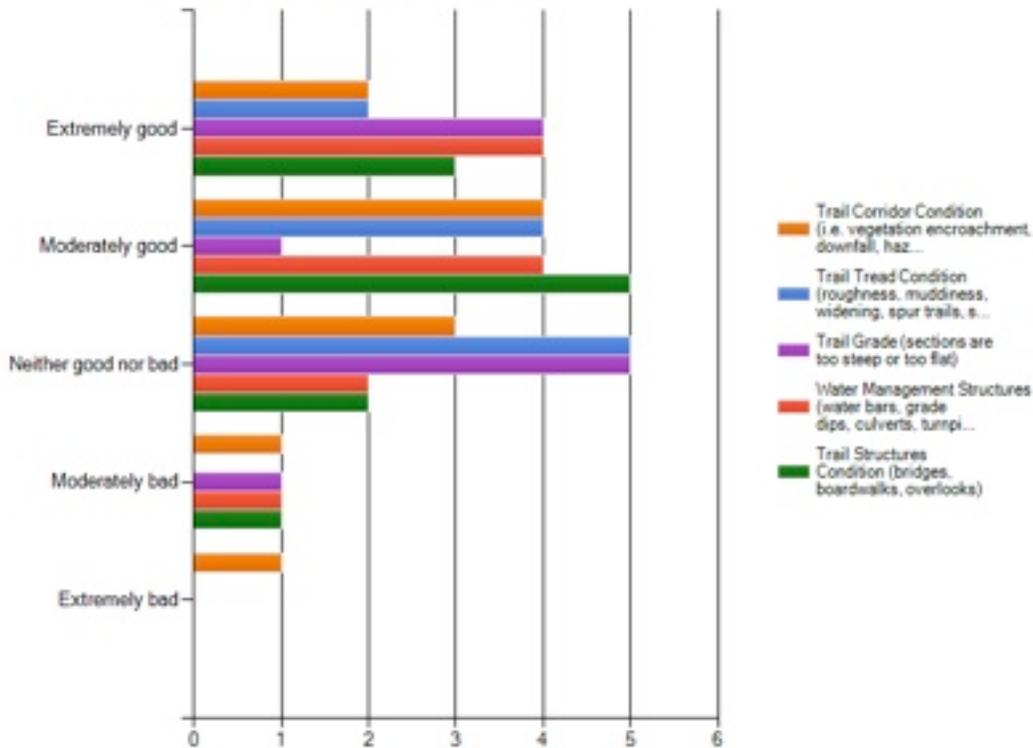
Survey Results: Volunteers

TRAIL USE_SONGBIRD_VOL



Number of Respondents

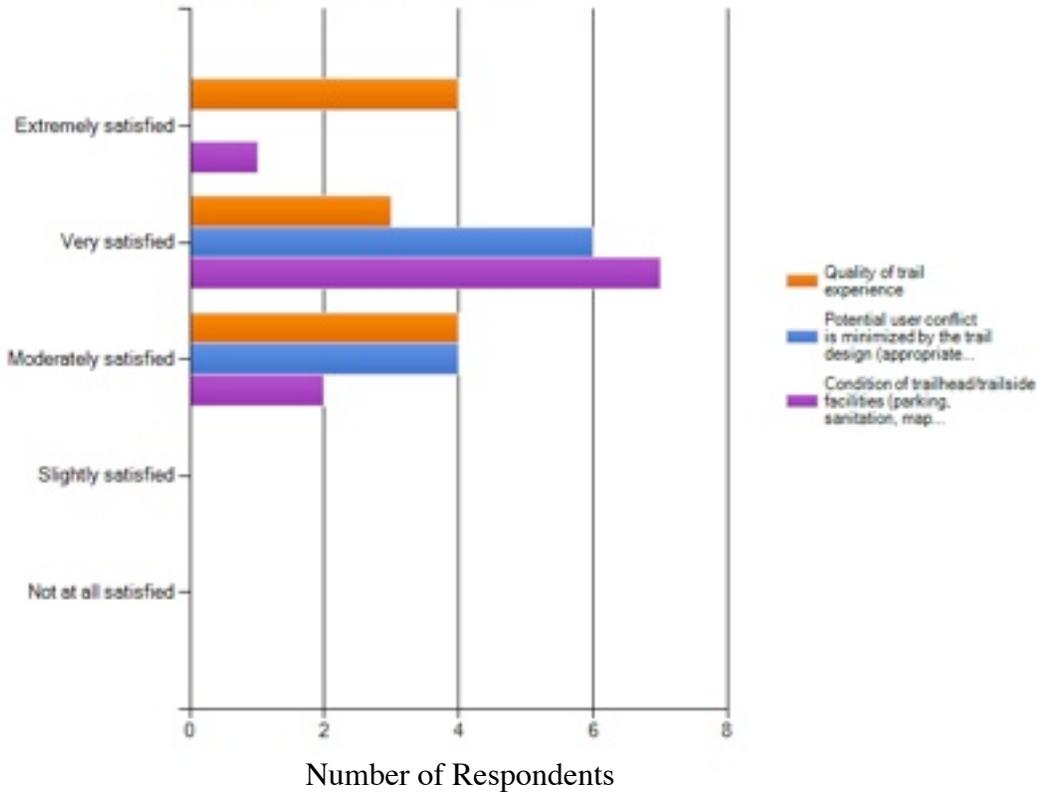
PHYSICAL SETTING_SONGBIRD_VOL



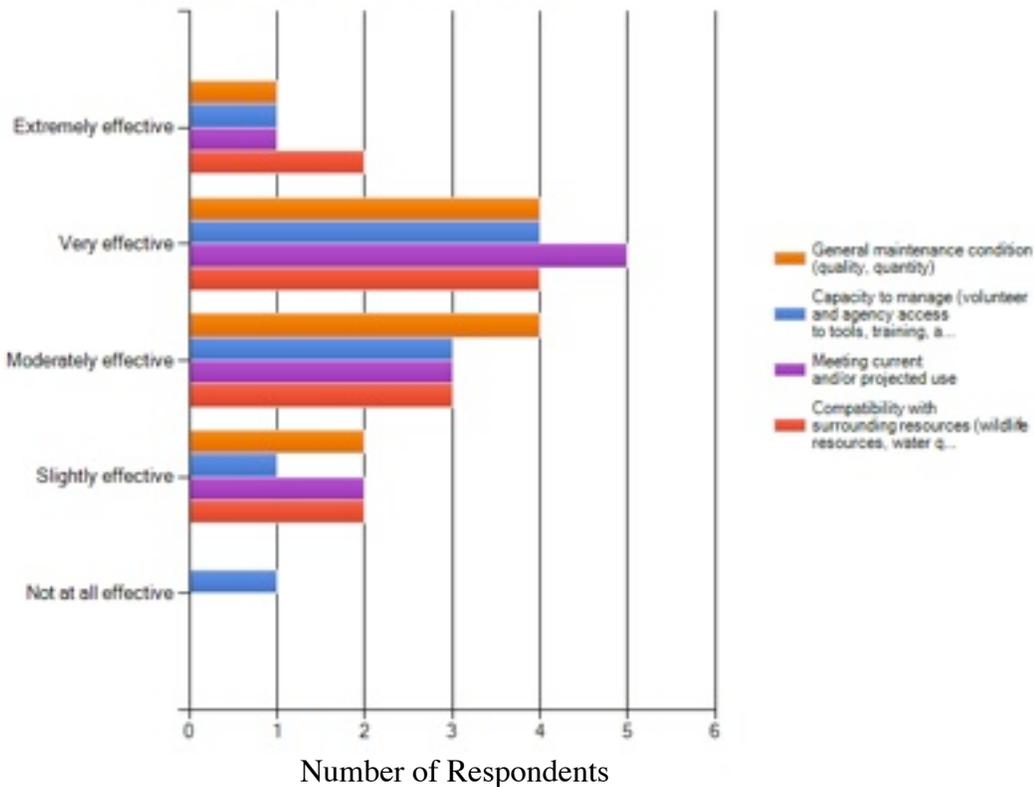
Number of Respondents

Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_SONGBIRD_VOL



MANAGERIAL SETTING_SONGBIRD_VOL



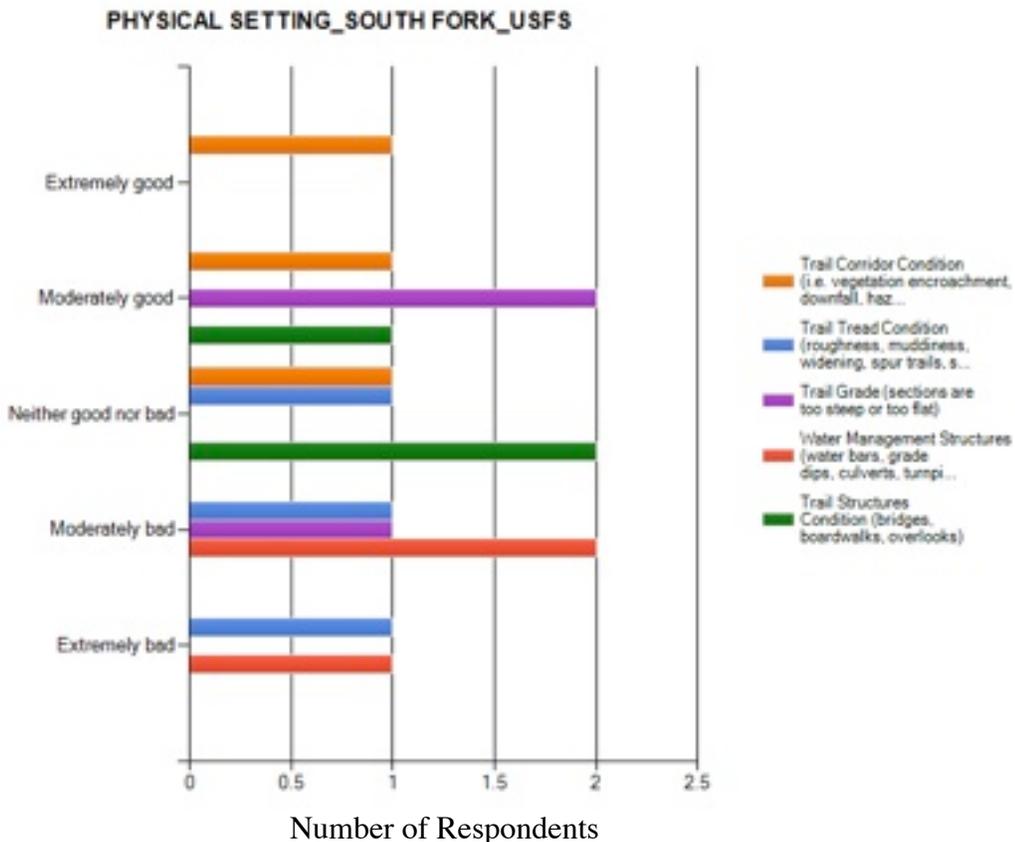
TRAIL: SOUTH FORK

Survey Results: Forest Service

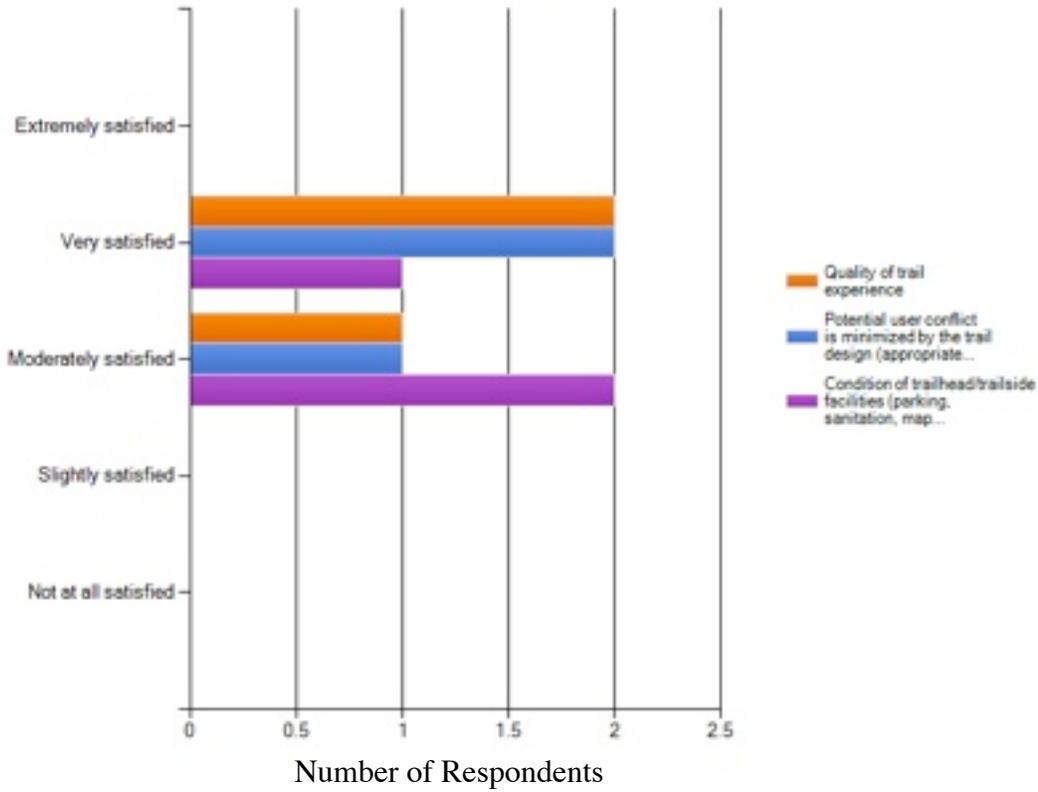
History: Old roadbed.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by BCHNG and BMTA vols.

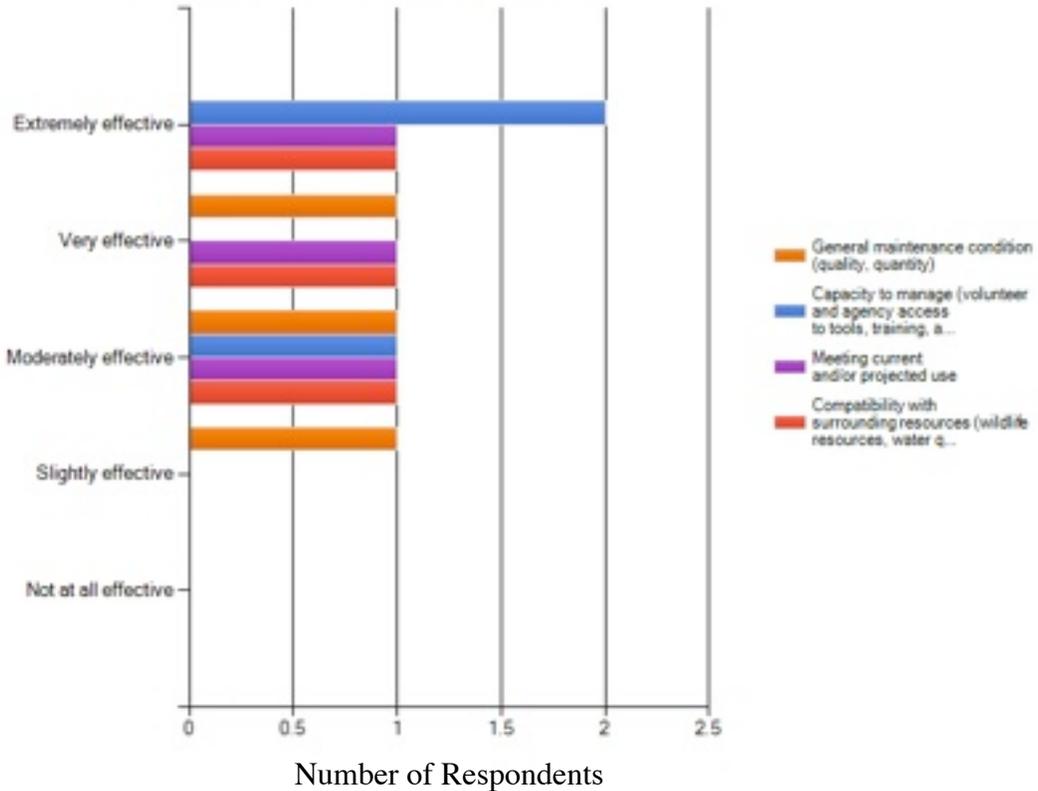
Reasons Included In Assessment: Assess entire trail for sustainability, especially regarding wet tread and drainage management



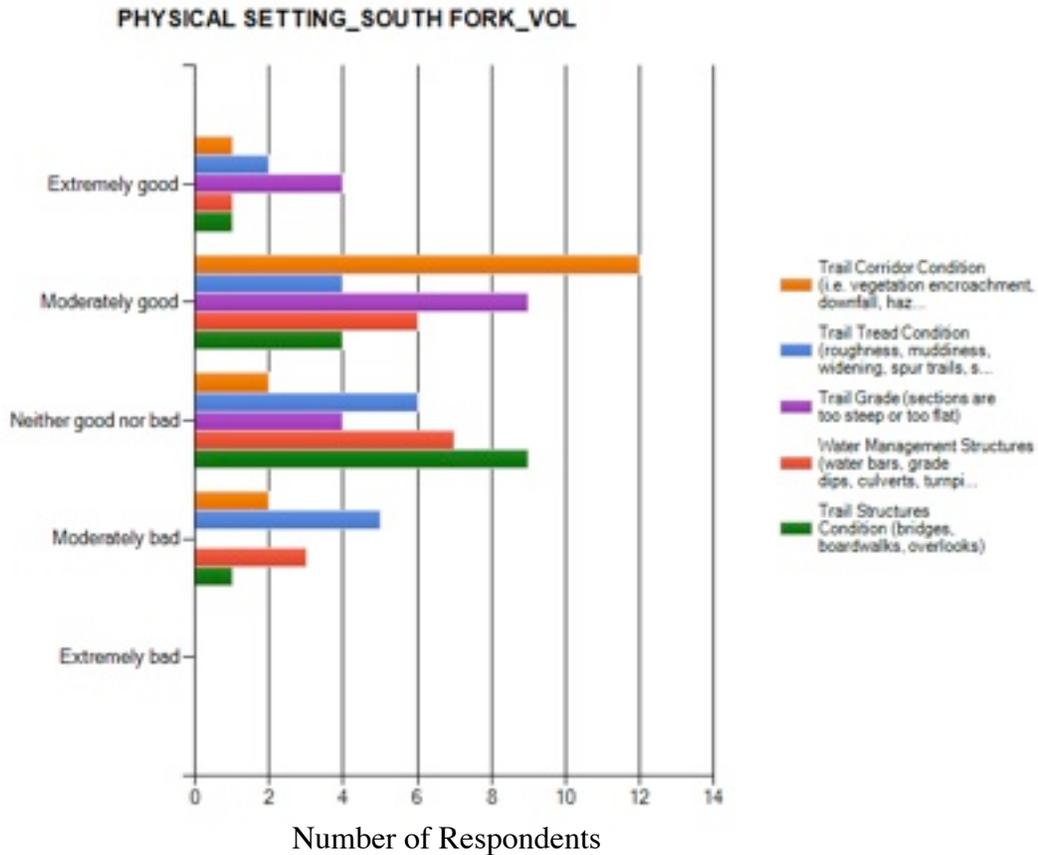
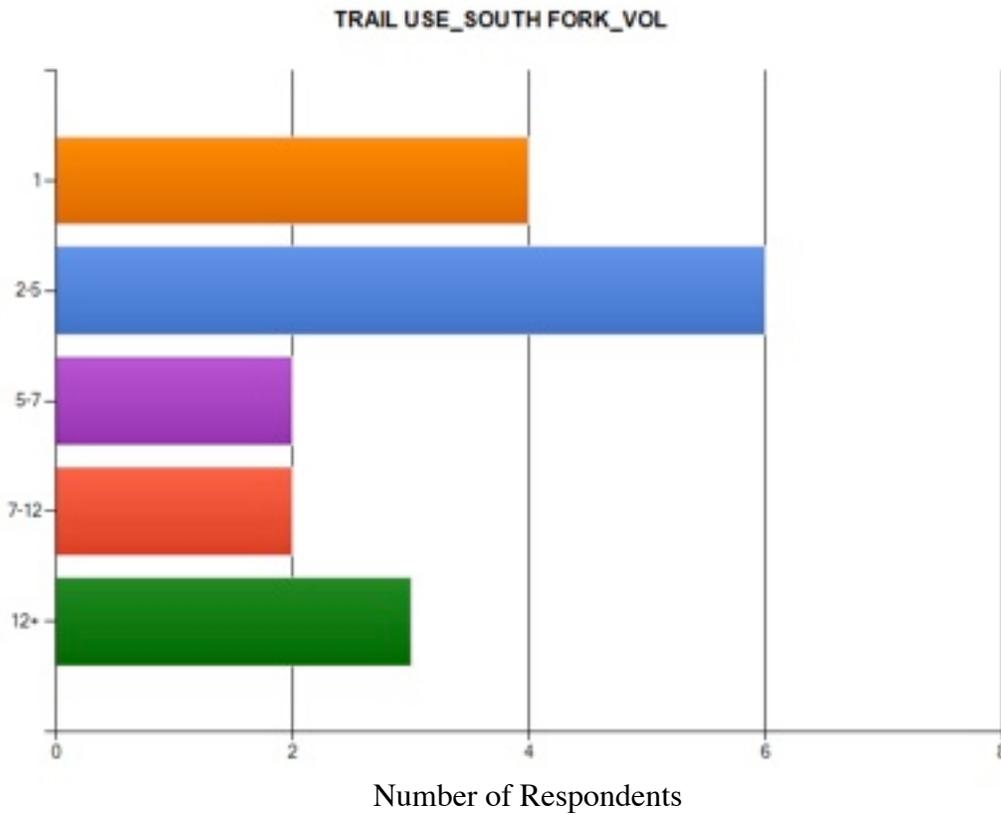
SOCIAL SETTING_SOUTH FORK_USFS



MANAGERIAL SETTING_SOUTH FORK_USFS

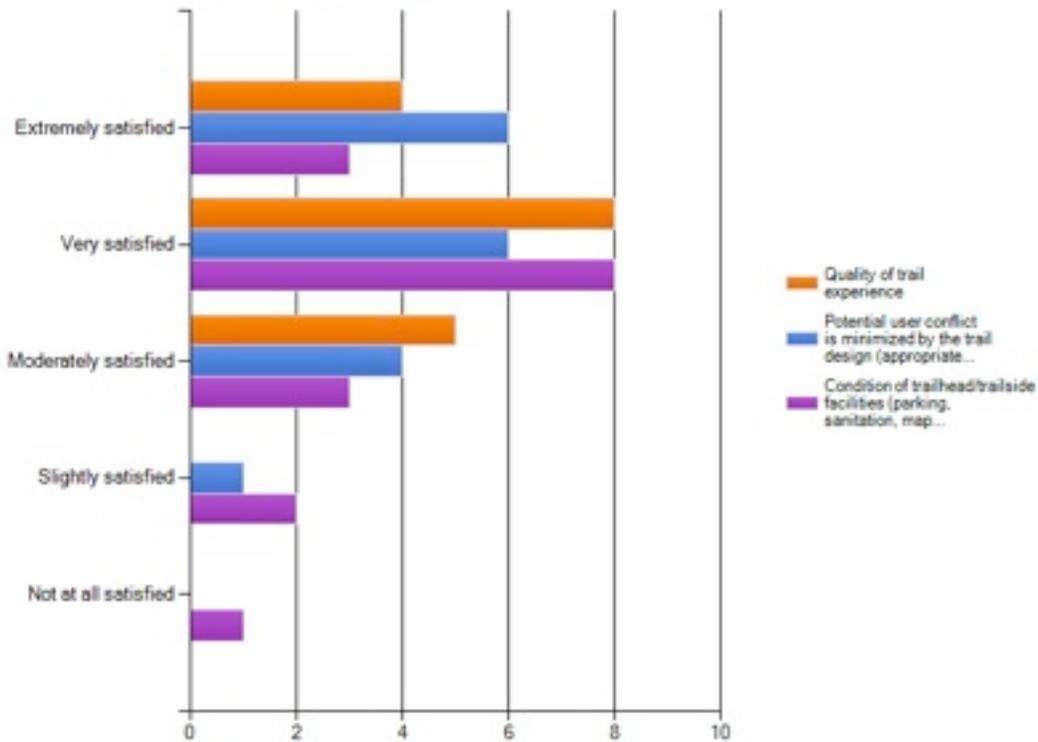


Survey Results: Volunteers



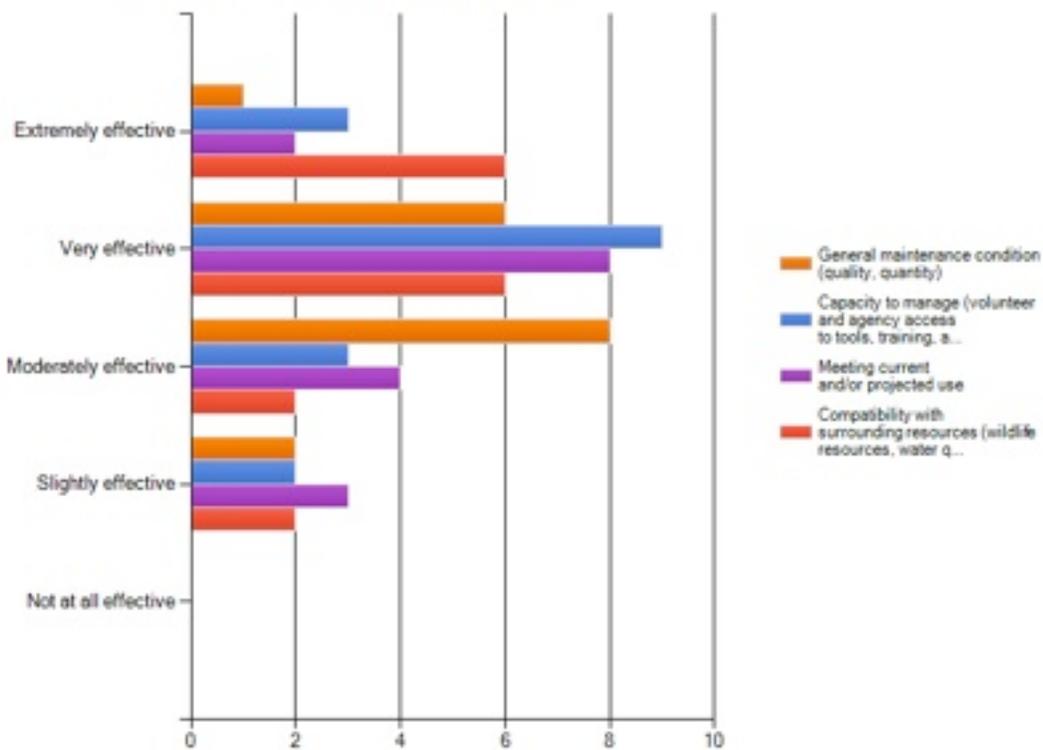
Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_SOUTH FORK_VOL



Number of Respondents

MANAGERIAL SETTING_SOUTH FORK_VOL



Number of Respondents

Volunteer Group Comments:

Backcountry Horsemen, North Georgia:

History: Old roadbed, already present when the USFS bought the land from private landowners (date unknown by BCHNG -- FS records should show).

Maintenance: Maintained by FS until 2007 when BCHNG adopted the Jacks River Fields Campground and nearby South Fork Trail and, more recently, a section of the Pinhoti Trail (between FS 64 and the South Fork Trail). A small section of the South Fork Trail is shared with the Benton MacKaye Trail. Maintenance of that section is now also shared between BCHNG and BMTA. General maintenance includes cleaning out water bars (on north end of trail), trimming canopy and trail corridor and removing blowdowns as needed. Estimated volunteer maintenance hours: Average 40 hours / year on the trail, many more on the campground.

Use: Year round use by hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians

Issues: There are a couple of trail sections that have become very "boggy" where short temporary reroutes have been established. These problems were pointed out to FS by BCHNG 2+ years ago and a contract has been issued to build a "turnpike" to solve the problems. Execution of the contract is expected in April 2012.

IMBA/SORBA:

History: This trail was opened in the early 1990s to mountain bikes. It appears in Jim Parham's 1993 and 1999 editions of his mountain biking guide, as well as in Alex Nutt's 1998 mountain biking guide.

Use: Lightly used. Advanced riders only. VERY remote (further than mountain town)

Issues: Lack of signage is a problem, easy to get lost. Lack of maintenance.. Most of the trail is gravel road. Only 3 miles of singletrack . Rocky and technical, very backcountry, 2 deep water crossing.

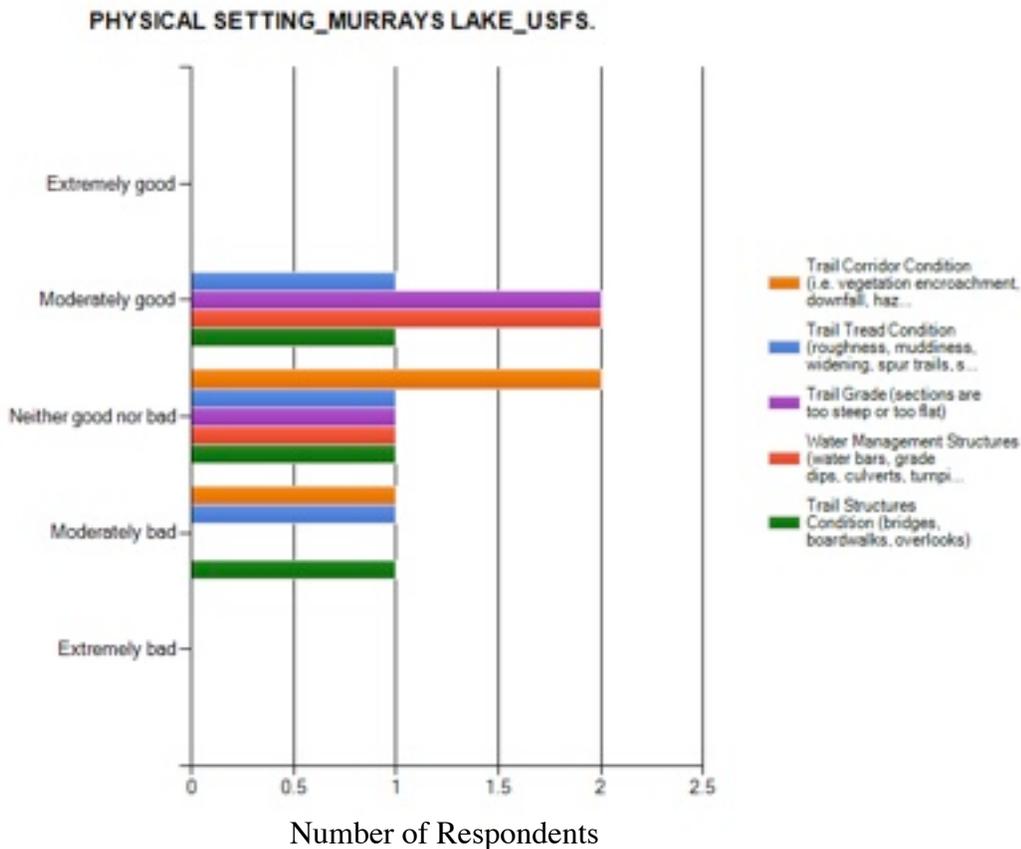
TRAIL: MURRAYS LAKE

Survey Results: Forest Service

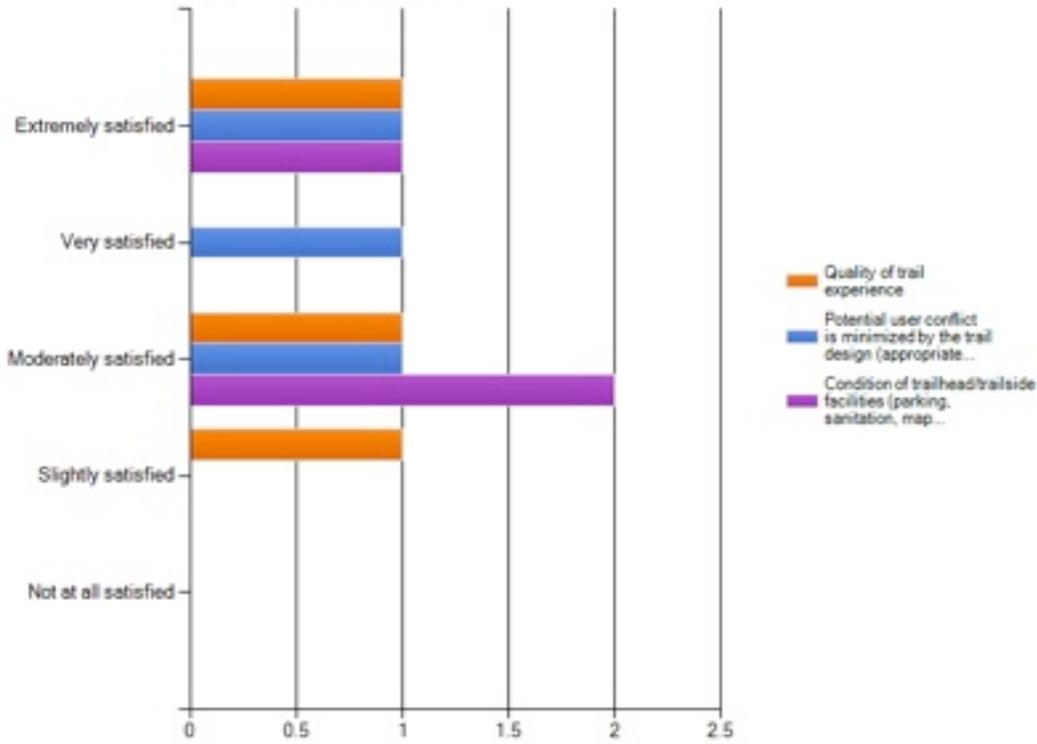
History: Constructed by FS in 90s. .

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by FS, CDTV, Boy Scouts

Reasons Included In Assessment: Assess entire trail for sustainability and section with soft soils.

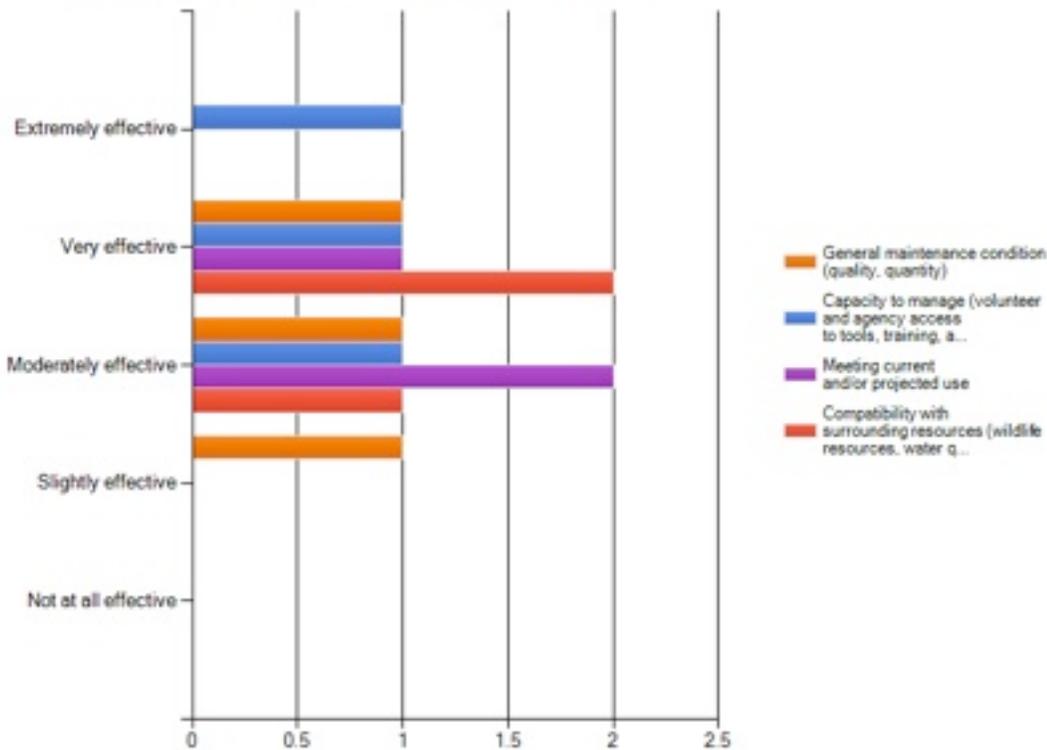


SOCIAL SETTING_MURRAYS LAKE_USFS



Number of Respondents

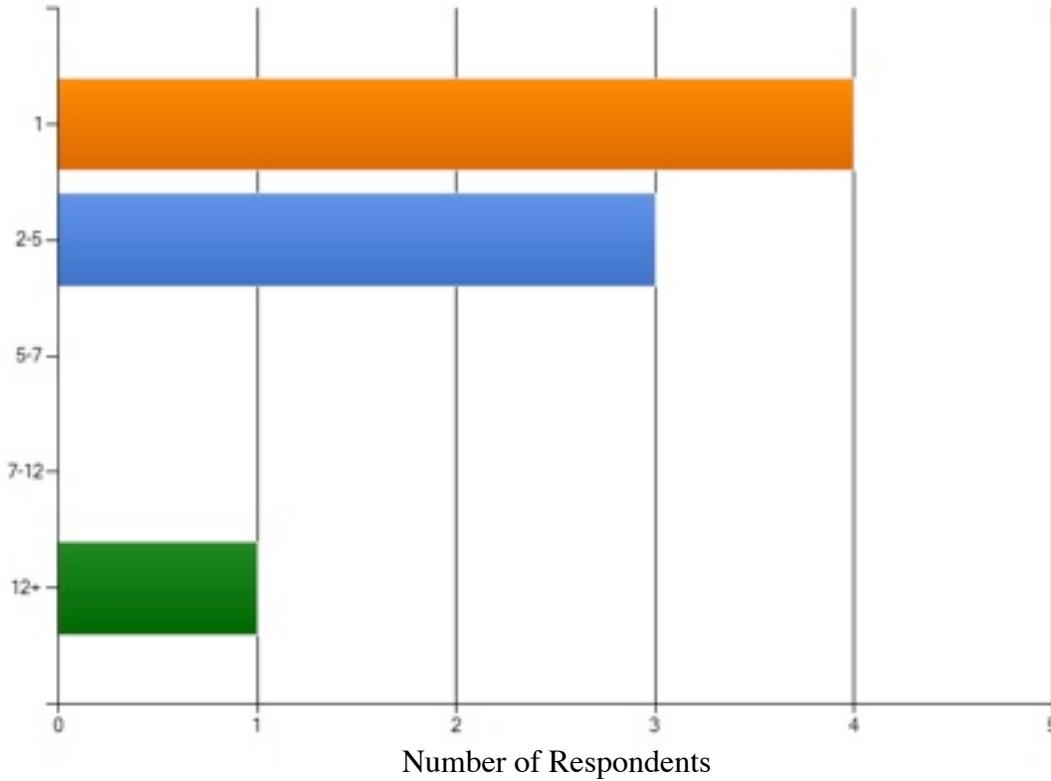
MANAGERIAL SETTING_MURRAYS LAKE_USFS



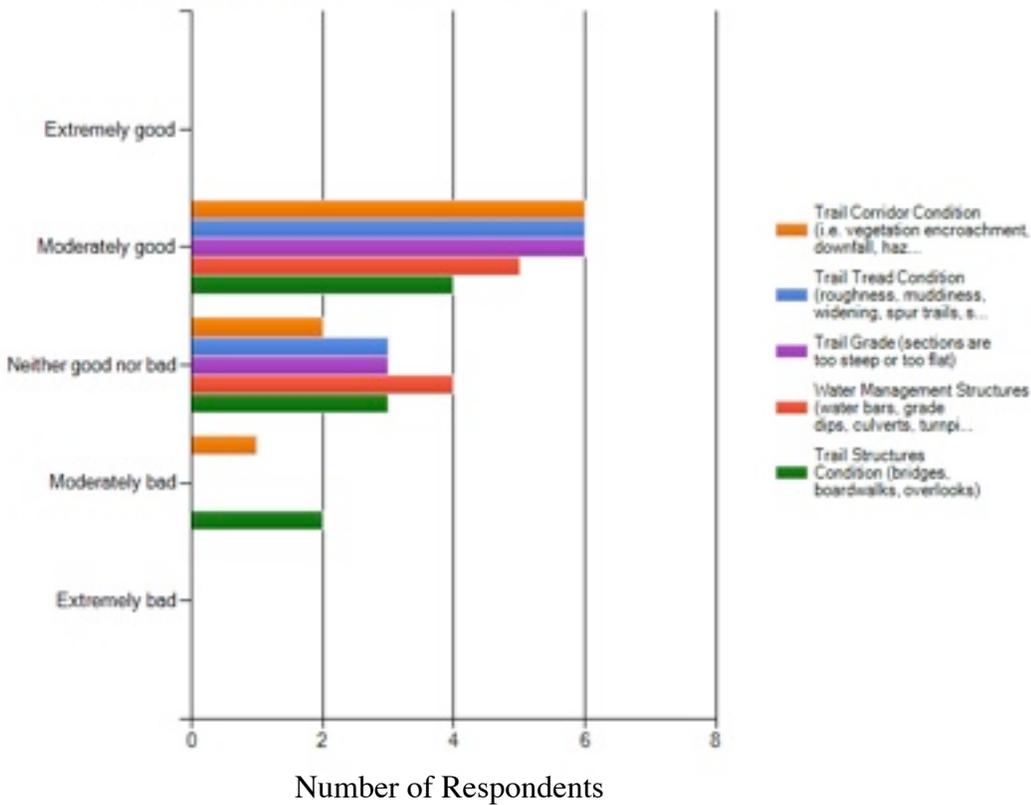
Number of Respondents

Survey Results: Volunteers

TRAIL USE_MURRAYSLAKE_VOL

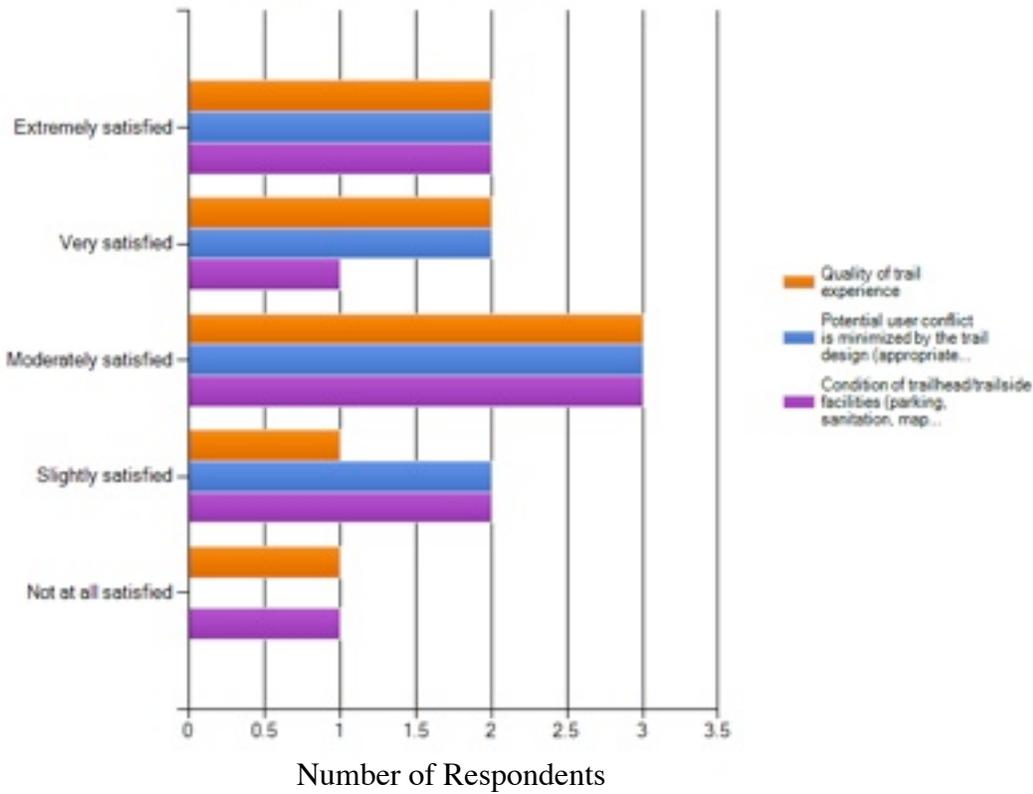


PHYSICAL SETTING_MURRAYSLAKE_VOL

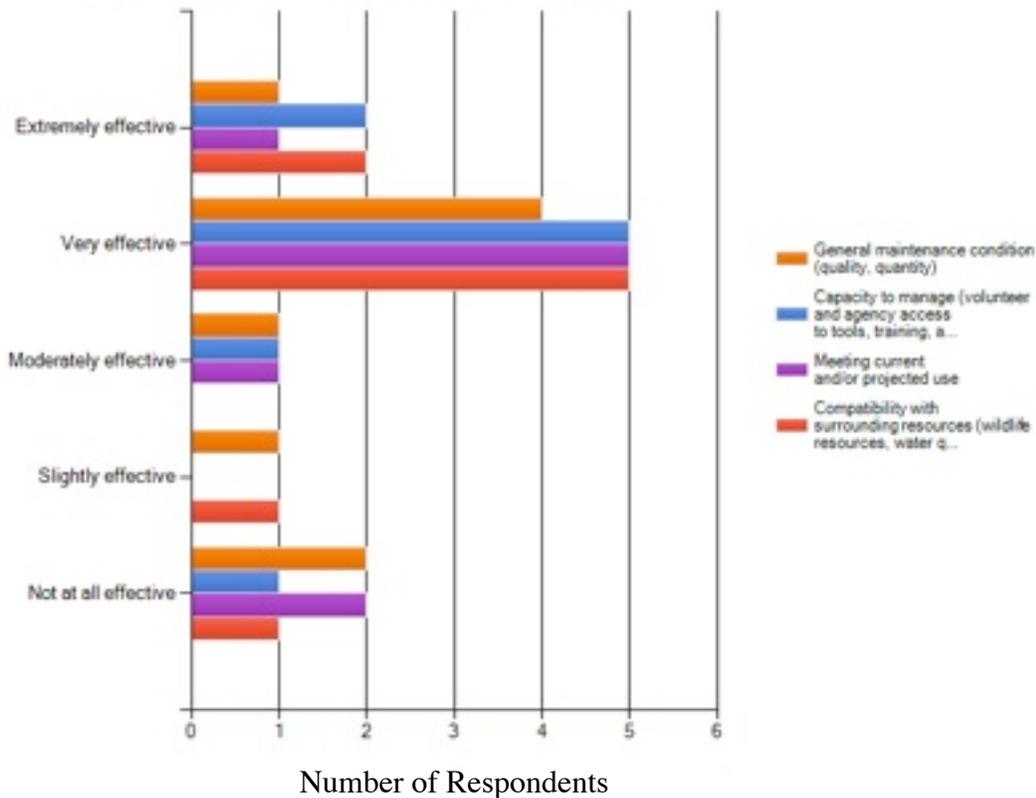


Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_MURRAYSLAKE_VOL



MANAGERIAL SETTING_MURRAYSLAKE_VOL



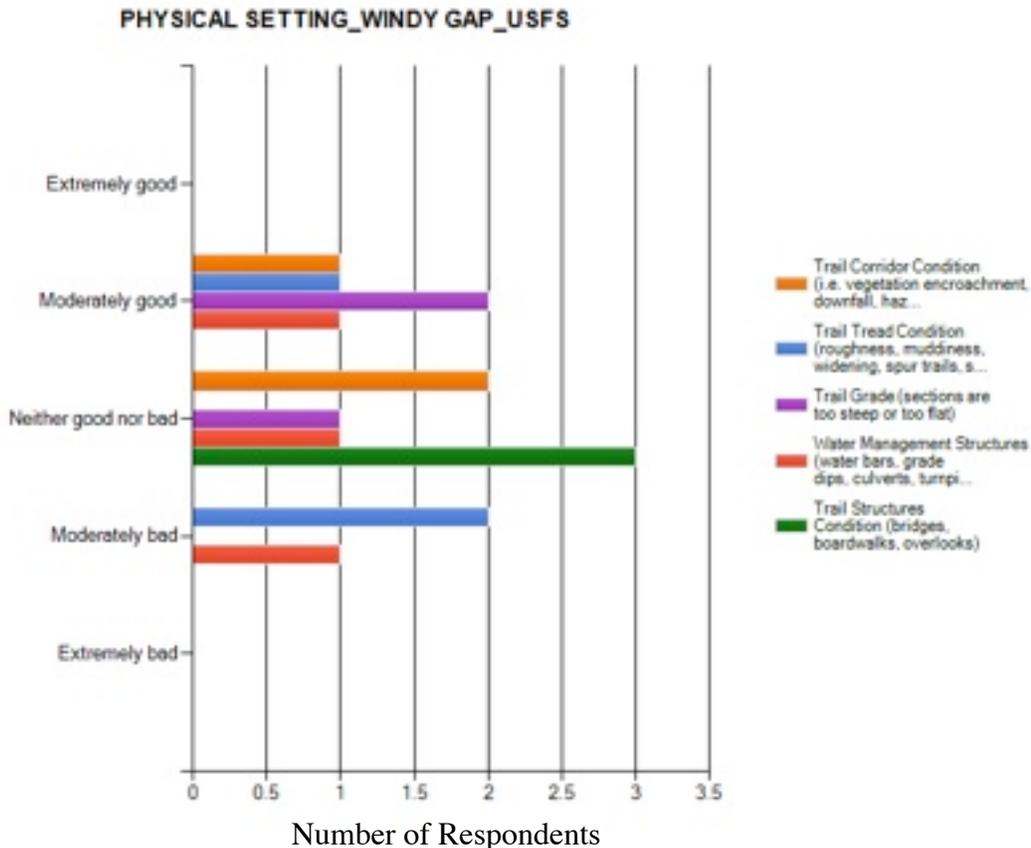
TRAIL: WINDY GAP

Survey Results: Forest Service

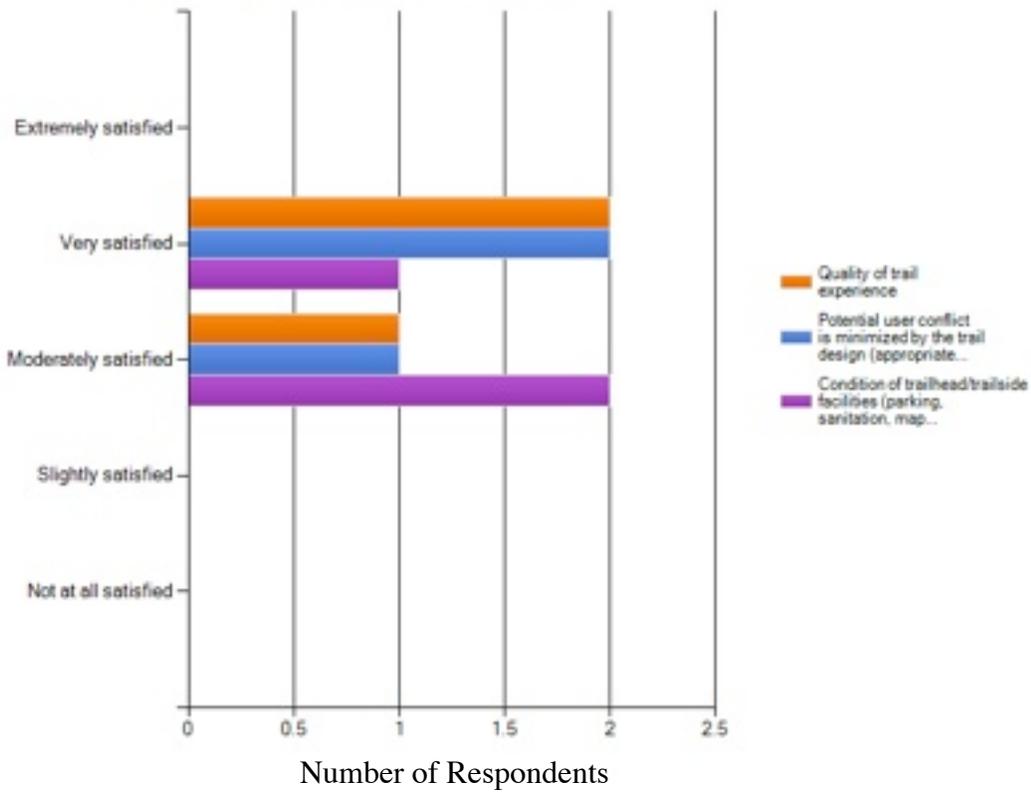
History: Lower section is old roadbed, upper is steep singletrack. Built in 70s by FS. Upper section reconstructed in early 90s. Opened to mountain bikes by admin decision in early 90s.

Maintenance Providers: Maintained by FS, SORBA, CDTV.

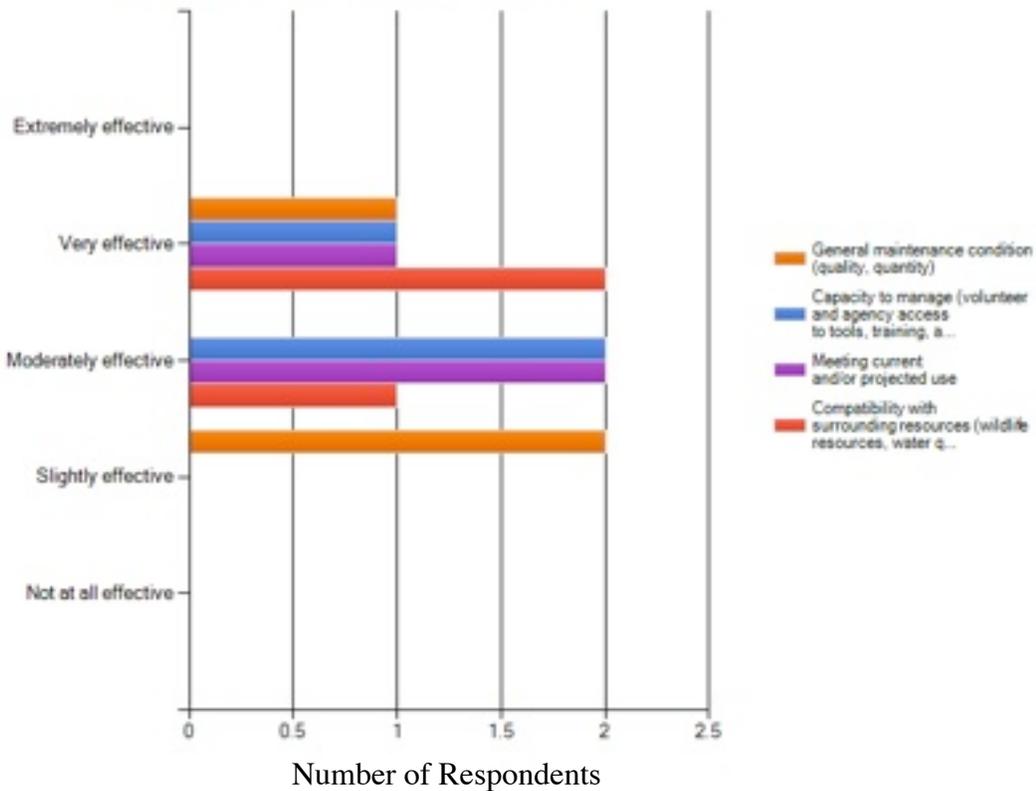
Reasons Included In Assessment: Upper section needs assessment due to fall line trail and rock barriers.



SOCIAL SETTING_WINDY GAP_USFS

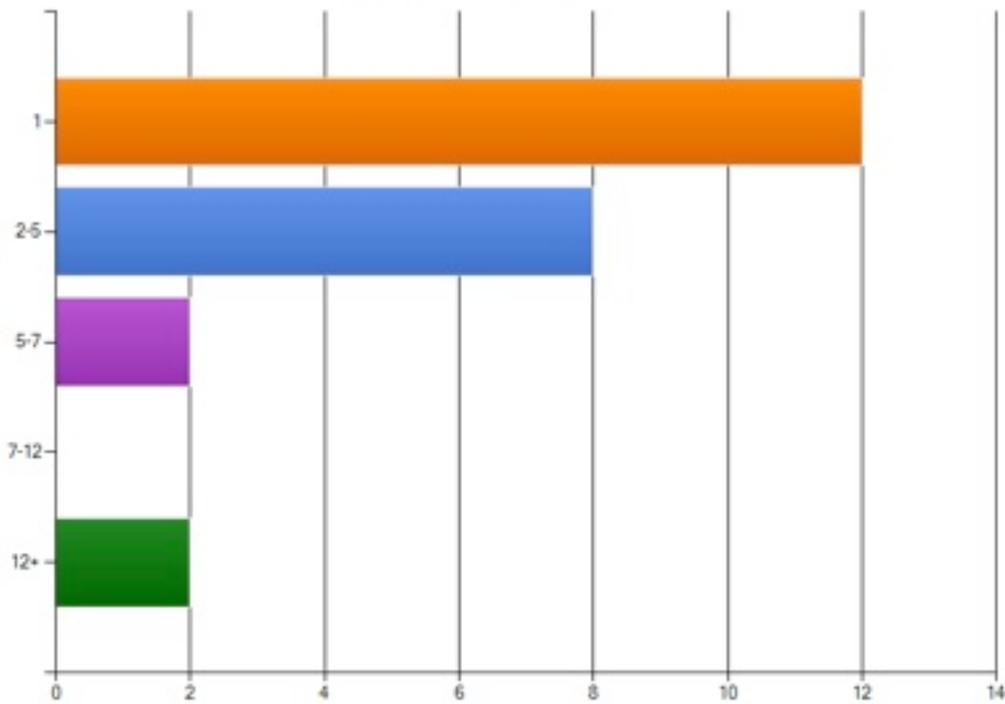


MANAGERIAL SETTING_WINDY GAP_USFS



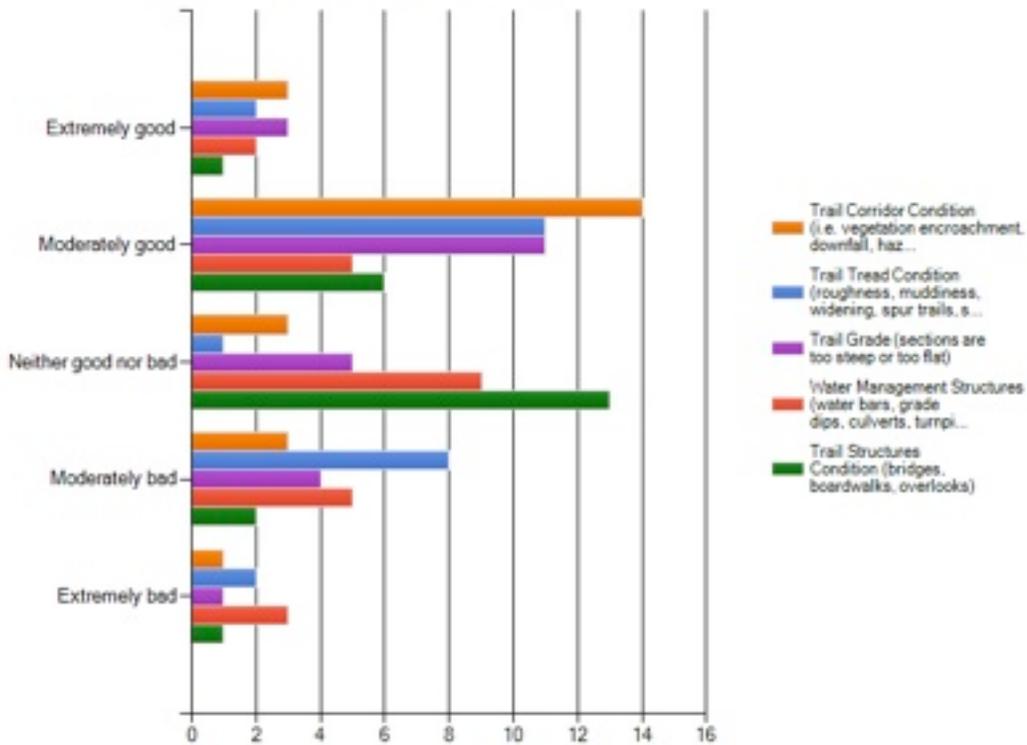
Survey Results: Volunteers

TRAIL USE_WINDY GAP_VOL



Number of Respondents

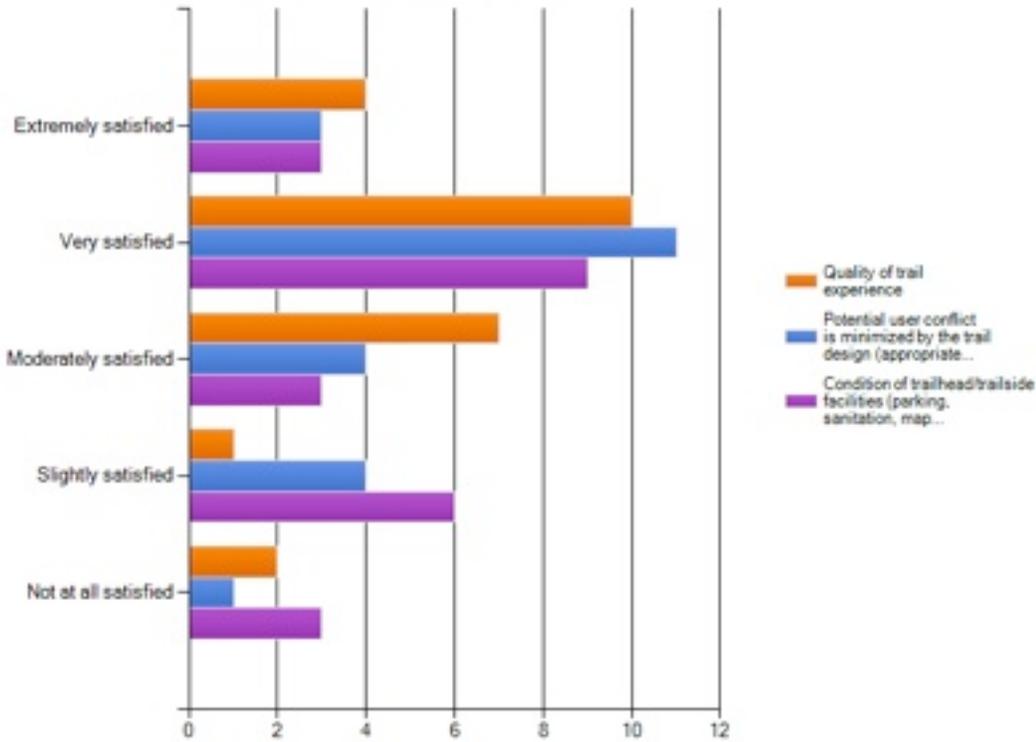
PHYSICAL SETTING_WINDY GAP_VOL



Number of Respondents

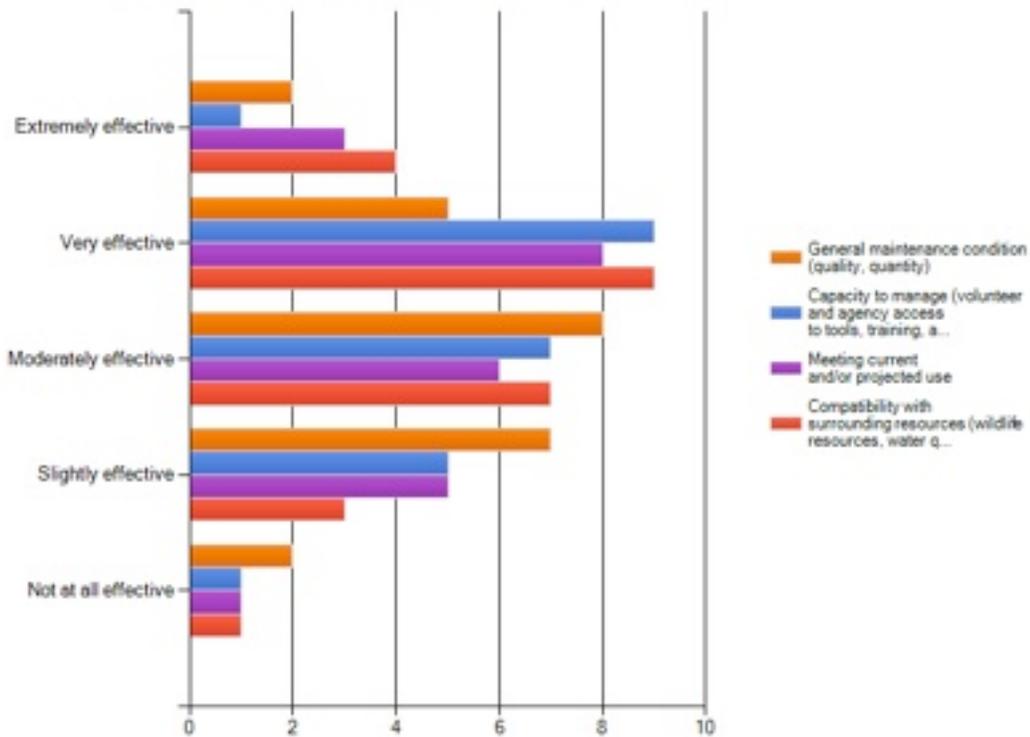
Survey Results: Volunteers

SOCIAL SETTING_WINDY GAP_VOL



Number of Respondents

MANAGERIAL SETTING_WINDY GAP_VOL



Number of Respondents

Volunteer Group Comments:

IMBA/SORBA:

History: Opened in late '80s.

Maintenance: SORBA has held large work parties in the past, but not recently. 10 years ago.

Use: Primarily used by motorcycles. Ridden year round by advanced mountain bikers, most use is during the warmer months. Generally mountain biked as a large loop that includes Lower Windy Gap, Milma, Tibbs,

Upper Windy Gap, and back to Lower.

Issues: None.