

Wolf Pen Gap Trail Complex Interim Management Plan



INTRODUCTION

The Ouachita National Forest has been directed to reevaluate the Wolf Pen Gap Trail Complex (WPG) and designate a system of roads and trails for public use of motorized vehicles. The deadline for a decision is December 30th, 2011; until a decision is made to implement the Wolf Pen Gap 2011 Project (long term actions to create a sustainable OHV network), the Forest intends to take key steps to improve coordination between and among stakeholders and to reduce movement of sediment from the trail complex via area streams.

The Forest Service and stakeholders will focus on actions such as maintenance and repair of existing trail tread, improvements to drainage structures, and installation of new drainage structures would occur. This Interim Management Plan describes the implementation of these actions, as well as short term resource protection measures, and public collaboration efforts.

Scope of this Document _____

The purpose of this plan is to identify and prioritize interim work tasks necessary to manage WPG in order to:

- standardize and implement trail/road maintenance requirements to achieve and maintain a sustainable trail system;
- meet the USFS standard for a designed use Class 2/3, Standard Terra, OHV trail complex to the extent possible on existing trails, and;
- reduce impacts to stream systems and water quality by disconnecting the trail complex from streams to the extent possible.

The tasks identified within are derived from recommendations of professional Forest Service staff, and trail system assessments conducted by Trails Unlimited (File Code: # U30-Trails Unlimited), USFS San Dimas Technology Development Center (Functional Review dated January 6th, 2010), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS letter dated June 22nd, 2010), Ouachita NF Forest Hydrologist Alan Clingenpeel (letter dated April 16th, 2010), and Land

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Between The Lakes NRA OHV trail specialist William Ryan (personal communication on July, 15th, 2010).

Recommendations are based upon meeting the minimum standard for a designed use OHV trail while retaining as much of the existing layout, mileage, and as many experiences as possible.

This document does not include any study of optimum trail location (new or existing), nor does it consider any proposed layout for those sections recommended for relocation. Additional studies and field work will be required to accomplish these tasks. Although data generated in order to prioritize tasks associated with this rehabilitation plan will be helpful in environmental analysis, this is not a precursor NEPA document, nor is it a complete list of activities. The intent of this plan is to remain flexible while focusing on collaborative priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities

Prioritization of tasks associated with the management of WPG is intended to:

- Inform and improve coordination between and among the USFS and stakeholders.
- Provide a method to allocate resources (i.e. money, material, and effort) in the event of resource short-falls.
- Communicate short-term intentions with respect to trail closures and trail system improvements.

Priority 1

- Trail Management Objectives
 - Establish Trail Management Objectives and Road Management Objectives (TMO's and RMO's) for all existing trail/road segments in the WPG. TMO's/RMO's will inform management.
 - Procure and install OHV width limiter devices to restrict trail vehicle width to 64 inches.
- Trail Design & Layout Training & Trail Dozer Training
 - Provided by Trails Unlimited most likely during the last week of October, coordinated by the USFS, open to staff from the USFS and cooperators.
- Formalize agreements between USFS and stakeholders (local and County governments, ATV clubs, associations, etc) with respect to maintenance, equipment use/sharing, cost sharing, and training opportunities.
- Education and Sign Campaign
 - Collaborate to develop and install signs that both explain and clearly post decisions and actions in WPG.
- Garbage Collection Improvement
 - Replace current trash cans with wildlife proof cans.

Priority 2

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- Short-term Resource Protection – Emergency Trail Closures
 - Trails will be posted as closed and educational signage will be installed.
 - The focus of short term resource protection trail closure is to substantially reduce sediment movement in an effective, cost efficient manner from the following trail segments:
 - The east end of Trail 8, also known as “Rattlesnake”
 - OHV traffic will be rerouted to Road 95.
 - Trail 836
 - Trail 4 from the intersection of Trail 6 to the intersection of Trail 614
 - Trail 8 from the intersection of Trail 826 to Trail 836
 - Initial stabilization work may be contracted. This is not obliteration. Any recognized stabilization method or combination of methods and materials may be considered to stabilize these trail segments.
 - These closures would be authorized under a Forest Supervisor Closure Order. If further study reveals that certain trails are unsustainable, a NEPA decision would be required to “obliterate” or decommission trails. Until further study is completed only activities intended to maintain trails or stabilize soil are permitted.
 - A material/supply list will be developed to support these closures.
 - A cost estimate will be developed.
- Design Reconstruction
 - Design reconstruction is aimed at improving existing trail segments in order to further improve trail complex sustainability (see attached map).
 - Trail 6
 - Continue and complete ongoing work being conducted by Ouachita ATV Club (OAC).
 - Design reconstruction to repair all necessary water control structures and manage the trail segment in accordance with the TMO.
 - Trail 313 & 3
 - The highest priority is to initiate engineering design work for a bridge (or other appropriate crossing structure) across a boggy area.
 - Build the crossing structure.
 - Install approximately 35 arch culverts
 - Stabilize approximately 12 unstable grade segments (i.e. con-lock or tri-lock type reinforcement).
 - Install concrete mat type stream crossing (approximately two crossings)
 - Design reconstruction to remove/repair all necessary water control structures and to manage the trail segment in accordance with the TMO.
 - Trail 1 (Road 510) & Trail 6 (Road 243)
 - Collaborate with engineering to improve coordination of road maintenance.
 - Design reconstruction to remove/repair all necessary water control structures and to manage the trail segment in accordance with the RMO.
 - Trail 8 from the intersection of Trail 816 to Trail 826

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- Ultimately this trail segment should be relocated since it is not sustainable in the current location. Therefore, only temporary, but appropriate methods to stabilize this trail segment should be considered.
- Install approximately 16 arch culverts
- Stabilize approximately 20 unstable grade segments (i.e. con-lock or tri-lock)
- Design reconstruction to remove/repair all necessary water control structures and to manage the trail segment in accordance with the TMO.

Funding Sources and Strategy _____

Funding for trail/road rehabilitation should come from a variety of sources. Examples of possible sources include USFS allocated funds, grant sources, and volunteer in-kind contributions (ATV Clubs, individuals). Funding will be collaborative.

Cost Estimates by Priority _____

Priority 1 \$80,000

Priority 2 \$200,000

