

Decision Memo

Bartram Trail at Wilson Gap Trail Reroute

Chattooga River Ranger District

USDA Forest Service -Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests Rabun County, Georgia

DECISION & PURPOSE AND NEED:

I have decided to approve the proposal to construct a 0.6 mile reroute of the Bartram Trail at Wilson Gap. This project will remove hiker traffic from Forest Road 155 and will improve the aesthetic quality of the hiking experience through this section. The reroute is located in Compartment 37, stand 23.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

I have determined that this action falls within Category 1 of the Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 31.2 for categorical exclusions. This action has been determined to have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively, and is therefore categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or an Environmental Assessment, but does require the completion of a project folder and Decision Memo.

Based on the results of internal and external scoping, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist that could cause the action involved with this project to have significant effects.

Public Involvement

A scoping letter was mailed on August 17, 2007 to those individuals and organizations that have requested notification of this type of project. Four comments were received during the scoping period, two of which identified a potential alternate route. (Project File). Two of the individuals provided recommendations to reroute this trail in an alternate location. This alternate route was reviewed and I decided not to move forward with their recommendation.

The basis for my decision is the presence of several trails, old roadbeds, and use on the north side of the Windy Gap Road. A reroute into this area would create several intersections with other uses, some of which are illegal. A reroute of the Bartram Trail into this area would increase the likelihood of these other conflicting uses diverting onto the Bartram Trail, which would diminish the recreational experience for those hiking the Bartram.

The concern with the selected route south of Windy Gap was that this would provide ATV traffic with another alternative route taking off from the Windy Gap Road. This is possible with the selected route; however, it is already a reality with the uses occurring on the north side. To mitigate this possibility on the selected reroute, I believe we can incorporate barriers into the design that will discourage other types of use on the Bartram Trail where it crosses the Windy Gap Road.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This action is consistent with the 2004 Forest Plan for Management Prescription Area 9.H, Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential. This project adheres to the applicable standards and monitoring requirements in the Forest Plan.

This project complies with the seven requirements of 36 CFR 219.27(b) by following the Forest-wide standards as mentioned above. These requirements include goals for the area; potential effects on residual biota and adjacent biota; site productivity and the conservation of soil and water resources; and the desired effects on the environment.

No Proposed, Endangered, Threatened or Sensitive (PETS) plants or animals were present in the project location during inventories. (Project File).

The biological evaluation completed for this project determined that there would not be any adverse effects on species of special concern. (Project File).

This action complies with the National Historic Preservation Act. (Project File).

An assessment was completed for the project area to identify potential impacts to soil and water resources. No jurisdictional wetlands, 100 year floodplains or municipal watersheds exist within the proposed project area.

This project will be implemented with appropriate erosion control measures for recreation trails: planned and designed to comply with Georgia's Erosion and Sediment Control Act and current Forest Plan standards related to erosion and water quality. This project complies with applicable sections of the Clean Water Act.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f)

Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately. This project is scheduled to begin in the summer or fall of 2008.

Contact Person

For further information concerning this decision contact Allen Smith or Terrance Fletcher by phone, letter, e-mail, or in person. The address of the Chattooga River Ranger District office is 809 Highway 441 South, Clayton, GA 30525, and the phone number is (706) 754-6221 or (706) 782-3320. Contact Allen by e-mail at asmith02@fs.fed.us or Terrance at terrancefletcher@fs.fed.us.

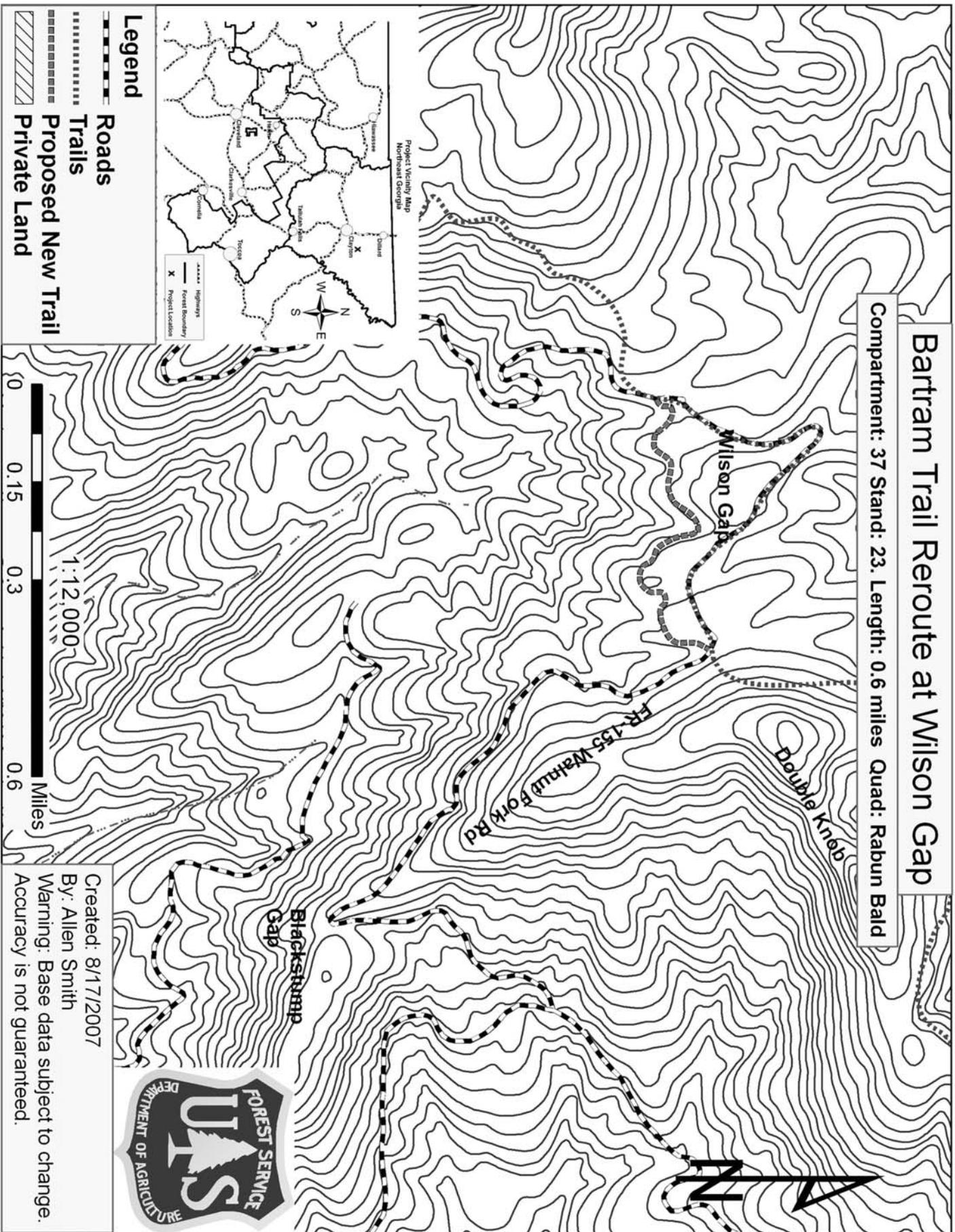
SIGNATURE AND DATE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

/s/ Mike Brod (for)
David W. Jensen
District Ranger, Chattooga River Ranger District

September 2, 2008
Date

Bartram Trail Reroute at Wilson Gap

Compartment: 37 Stand: 23. Length: 0.6 miles Quad: Rabun Bald



Created: 8/17/2007
By: Allen Smith
Warning: Base data subject to change.
Accuracy is not guaranteed.