



Limits of Acceptable Change Red River Gorge



USDA FOREST SERVICE • DANIEL BOONE NATIONAL FOREST • SEPT. 2004

Field Trip held in Red River Gorge

On Saturday, August 7, approximately 35 people came to the Gladie Cultural-Environmental Education Center to participate in one of two tours in the Gorge. The purpose of the tours was to give participants a first-hand look at different recreation activities occurring in the Gorge as well as some of the impacts. In addition, participants began to look at the Gorge with the intent of defining opportunity zones which is part of Step 2 of the LAC process.

The first group hiked up to Tower Rock in the Clifty Wilderness. The group looked at rock climbing areas, bouldering locations, system trails, user developed trails, and campsites. The group also had lengthy discussions about the importance of archaeological sites and protection measures.

The second group took a driving tour with stops at Wilderness gateway near the KY 715 bridge over the Red River and the Princess Arch Trail at end of Chimney Top Road. The group discussed user developed trails such as the Douglas Trail, Wilderness management, and archaeological sites.

After the tours, participants returned to Gladie for a picnic lunch and discussion of the day's events. Overall, the field trip was a success and we will try and hold other such events in the future.

Dear Friend of the Gorge,

We are well into Step 2 of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process, "Defining and Describing Opportunity Zones". An opportunity zone is a narrative description of the kinds of resource and social conditions acceptable for that zone and the type of management activity considered appropriate.

During our first Step 2 workshop, participants broke into two groups to brainstorm ideas for the different opportunity zones applicable to the Red River Gorge. This exercise will be continued at the September 14 workshop.

We are also laying the groundwork for Step 4 of the LAC process (Inventory Resource and Social Conditions). We have been consulting with Recreation Ecologist Dr. Jeff Marion from Virginia Tech on developing inventory protocols. We anticipate conducting resource inventory work during the first nine months of 2005.

In addition, Social Scientist Dr. Sara Alexander from Baylor University has been conducting a visitor use survey to assist us with the social inventory work. Surveys were completed this summer and will continue this fall.

Inventory work is one of the most time-consuming aspects of the LAC process. There may be opportunities for interested publics to assist with inventory work. If you are interested, please contact LAC Coordinator Tim Eling.

This newsletter contains the schedule of upcoming LAC workshops for the remainder of 2004. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. Otherwise, we'll meet again on September 14.

Joy Malone
Stanton District Ranger
Daniel Boone National Forest

What is the role of Indian tribes in the LAC process?

There are several federal laws that the U.S. Forest Service follows in regard to relationships with Indian Tribes. Some examples include: National Historic Preservation Act, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, and Executive Order 13007 Indian Sacred Sites.

The Daniel Boone National Forest consults with six federally recognized Indian tribes. The forest has signed Memorandum of Understandings with each Tribe. Although none of these Tribes are in Kentucky today, each has some sort of connection to lands now managed by the Daniel Boone National Forest. The six tribes are:

- Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians in Oklahoma – Shawnee, OK
- Eastern Shawnee – Seneca, MO
- Shawnee Tribe – Miami, OK
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians –Cherokee, NC
- Cherokee Nation – Tahlequah, OK
- United Keetowah Band – Park Hill, OK

The Daniel Boone National Forest consults with these six Tribes on a variety of issues. This relationship is considered a government to government relationship. Stanton District Ranger Joy Malone and LAC Coordinator Tim Eling visited Oklahoma and North Carolina to consult with these Tribes on the LAC process during the summer of 2004. We accept and consider their input just as we do the general public. The Tribes support the LAC process.

2 Results of Step 1 - Final Issues

FINAL ISSUE STATEMENTS FROM JUNE 1 & 22, 2004 LAC WORKSHOPS

Step 1 of the LAC process involved “Identifying Issues and Concerns”. Two public workshops were held for Step 1 on June 1 and 22, 2004. Participants developed the final list of issues (listed below)

during the two workshops. Some issues statements have been combined if we felt that they were similar in content. We also reworded a few statements to make the intent clearer.

PROTECT/PRESERVE RESOURCES

- Protect resources.....while allowing recreation use
- Reduce impacts from camping – noise, fire scares, trash.
- Reduce impacts of litter & human waste.
- Address issue of user developed trails.
- Develop a dynamic program to manage and protect cultural resources including during the LAC process.
- Restore RRG to a natural state.
- Develop a mitigation plan to eliminate abuse that incrementally gets more restrictive.
- Many areas of RRG adversely affected by machine made noises.
- Emphasize preservation of non-renewable resources.
- Work towards “zero new degradation” from user activities.
- Avoid displacing impacts to another area.
- Emphasize human powered recreation.
- Lack of education on user responsibility to protect resources.
- Protect rare species and biotic communities that are in fixed locations.
- Minimize impacts of pets.
- Concern over defacing of arches and other geological formations.

MAINTAIN/EXPAND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Allow recreation use... while protecting resources
- Allow the freedom to access areas of RRG without a lot of hassles and restrictions.
- Develop specific procedures for specific activities to minimize impact.
- Preservation of existing rock climbing.
- Enhance auto touring and access for disabled and those unable to hike.
- Roads are in poor condition.
- There is a lack of info about natural, recreational, and cultural assets in other areas outside the RRG.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Concern that too many people fall off cliffs.
- Concern that some people feel threatened by other visitors.
- There is a need to assess impacts caused by ignorance vs those caused by intentional illegal activities. Assign blame correctly.
- Hikers feel unsafe during hunting season.
- Minimize impacts from pets –noise, waste, safety of visitors.

SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

- Develop an aggressive non-negotiable plan for minimizing impacts to the RRG.
- Plan for the future - strive for longer term goals rather than minimal acceptable conditions.
- Use management that is science driven, result oriented, and rationally based with causal connection.

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Minimize adverse effects of use and management on local population.
- Management’s inability to enforce regulations.
- Lack of management presence as it relates to: preservation of resources, personal safety, education.

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Public Statements Held for Future Steps

Some statements were moved into a category titled “management actions”. We will not lose these statements. These statements will be held until Step 7 of the LAC process which is “Identifying Management Actions”. Some statements were moved into a category titled “Inventory Concerns”. These statements will be held for Step 4 of the LAC

process which is “Inventory Resource and Social Conditions”. Three statements were moved into the category “Beyond the Scope of LAC”. We feel that these statements cannot be addressed in the LAC process.

All of these statements are displayed below.

STATEMENTS SPECIFIC TO STEP 7 - MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

PROTECT/PRESERVE RESOURCES

- More designated/managed camping, primitive and non-primitive.
- Improve condition of existing trails.
- Hardening off recreation sites.
- Limit auto access.
- Plant native plants on hillsides to prevent erosion.
- Managed camping for the purpose of managing trash recovery.
- Limiting camping in undesignated sites – especially along waterways.
- Limit use of RRG-when trail is full, it’s full – limit parking may help.
- Limit access on a rotating schedule basis.
- Reduce impact through reduced load (fewer people).

MAINTAIN/EXPAND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Approval of sport climbing routes applied for previously.
- Permissible camping in some rock shelters.
- Better trail marking, including trail name and symbol id signs and frequent spray painting of corresponding symbols on trees adjacent to trails.
- Bike racks at Gladie and major trailhead parking areas.
- Review & approval of rock climbing on an area wide basis.
- Ability to publish new traditional climbing routes.

SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

- Share the load of recreation on other parts of the forest.
- Take user pressure off RRG by increased development of shorter day-hiking trails and camping (non-vehicular) at Cave Run Lake area – also better publicize such facilities.

EDUCATION

- Better public education of history of RRG.
- Education/mitigation to avoid impacts of rock climbing.
- Education of “Leave No Trace” techniques.
- Individual responsibility.
- Education of climbing impacts to non climbers.
- More signage regarding RRG preservation and cleanliness and, at danger points, safety; using large lettered, psychologically-motivating, concise verbiage.

Statements specific to Step 4 – Inventory.

These statements will be reviewed during Step 4 of the LAC process:

- Better inventory of baseline information to ascertain goals.
- Complete inventory of archaeological resources.
- Complete inventory of biological resources.
- Complete biological inventory – what and where – to assist in determining future uses of various areas.
- Evaluate priority level of archaeological inventory.

Statements beyond the scope of the LAC process:

- Expand the RRG – take over eastern KY.
- Limit access through private land.
- Transfer of RRG administration to National Park Service.



USDA Forest Service
Daniel Boone National Forest
1700 Bypass Road
Winchester, KY 40391



Red River Gorge Limits of Acceptable Change **SEPTEMBER UPDATE**



LAC Workshops continue through the fall

We are currently at Step 2 of the LAC process, "Defining and Describing Opportunity Zones". The first Step 2 workshop was held August 17, 2004. The dates for the next three LAC workshops are set for Tuesdays in September, October, and November. We will continue to hold the workshops at the Clark County Extension Office in Winchester from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The next LAC workshops will be:

Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2004 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2004 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2004 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

The Clark County Extension Office is located on Fortune Drive, 1/4 mile north of Interstate 64 at Exit 96.

CONTACT US

Address: Daniel Boone National Forest
Red River Gorge LAC Process
1700 Bypass Road
Winchester, KY 40391

E-mail:
comments-southern-daniel-boone@fs.fed.us

Phone: Tim Eling, LAC Coordinator –
(859) 745-3132

Fax: (859) 744-1568

Website:
www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/boone/lac