

**Shawnee National Forest
Hidden Springs Ranger District
Trails Designation Project Accomplishments
Month of September 2007**

Trail work accomplished in the Lusk Creek Wilderness under the Trails Designation Project using primitive tools and traditional methods in accordance with the Forest Service National Wilderness Policy:

- The trail crew continued to work on a continuation of a re-route that begins at the west end of the Natural Bridge landmark. The new re-route continues east looping under the southern boundary of the private property once called the Coyote Club. This re-route eventually cuts to the north on a switchback connecting with Trail # 492D, south of Secret Canyon. The final stages of work on this re-route involved the installment of several platforms used as steps forming a stairway along the contour of the terrain. It took considerable effort and days of construction to complete the steps. Forty-three large sandstones and eight cedar logs were collected from the general area and carried to the project site. The sandstones and logs were used to form the two platforms measuring six by three feet (Figure 1). To form the steps, the frame of the platforms were filled with hand crushed sandstone rock and capped with soil (Figures 2 and 3). The equivalent of 200 five gallon buckets of material was used to fill the platforms. In addition, the trail crew built a two tier dry stack retaining wall of sandstone measuring fifteen by two feet. The 1.5 miles of re-route will be open for use in the fall, and will provide users the opportunity to follow a trail loop that connects with popular natural land marks and stock confinement areas.

Trail work accomplished in non-wilderness areas within the Trail Designation Project areas using mechanized equipment:

- The trail crew completed construction on three quarters of a mile of new re-route for trail section # 481 located within the Lusk Creek Watershed at Frank's Tract. The section continues south stopping at the boundary of the Lusk Creek Wilderness. The original section was deeply rutted due to its location on steep slope. The new re-route follows the natural contour of the land, eliminating erosion issues at the old trail. Mechanical equipment used included the trail dozer (Sweco), mini-excavator, and gravel hauler.
- In addition, four tenths of a mile of Trail # 487 was reconstructed; this section is also located within the Lusk Creek Watershed and begins at Frank's Tract and continues northwest to a stand of pines. The reconstructed section lays in an area of thick Autumn Olive trees allowing very little sunlight to reach the ground resulting in wet, rutted tread (Figure 4). The trail dozer was used to smooth out the ruts and gravel was spread in the tread to allow for wet-weather ride-ability (Figure 5).

- Also, one mile of Trail # 487C was reconstructed; this trail also begins at Frank's Tract, but continues northeast along an old farm pond intersecting with Trail # 487H to the north. This section of trail is well traveled and required smoothing of some ruts, as well as, hardening the tread with gravel (Figures 6 and 7).

Planned project activities for October - December 2007:

- The trail crew will continue to work on trails in both the wilderness and non-wilderness areas within the project area. In addition, the second phase of the Trail Sign Plan for the Trails Designation Project is currently under way. Over one hundred new directional trail signs will be installed along designated trails at trail entrances and junctions, outside of the wilderness, within the Lusk Creek, Eagle Creek, Big Grand Pierre Creek, and Upper Bay Creek Watersheds.



Figure 1. Sandstone and cedar logs were used to form the platforms that became the steps forming a stairway along the contour of the terrain.



Figure 2. To form the steps, the frame of the platforms were filled with hand crushed sandstone rock and capped with soil.



Figure 3. The equivalent of 200 five gallon buckets of material was used to fill the platforms.



Figure 4. Before. Section of Trail # 487 lies in an area of thick Autumn Olive trees allowing very little sunlight to reach the ground resulting in wet, rutted tread.



Figure 5. After. The trail dozer was used to smooth out ruts, and gravel was spread in the tread to allow for wet-weather ride-ability.



Figure 6. Before. Trail # 487C has been well traveled and required smoothing of some ruts, as well as, hardening the tread with gravel.



Figure 7. After. One mile of Trail # 487C was reconstructed; this trail begins at Frank's Tract and continues northeast intersecting with Trail # 487H. Heavy equipment was used to repair ruts and spread gravel.