

**Shawnee National Forest  
Hidden Springs Ranger District  
Trails Designation Project Accomplishments  
Months of July - August 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 conduct trail work in the Lusk Creek Wilderness throughout the months of July and August. Two primary trail reconstruction projects were the focus during these months. The first project is a continuation of a reroute that begins at the west end of the Natural Bridge landmark. The new reroute continues east looping under the southern boundary of the private property once called the Coyote Club. The reroute, referred to as the Coyote Club Reroute, eventually cuts to the north on a switchback connecting with Trail # 492D south of Secret Canyon. The trail tread for the reroute was initially plowed in and graded earlier this summer by a mule team on loan from the Hoosier National Forest. The trail crew has since used hand tools to build erosion control features and provide detailed rock work in the construction of retaining walls and a switchback (Figures 1 – 4). The 1.5 miles of reroute 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.
  
- The second project was recently completed in August. The Bowed Tree Creek Crossing on Lusk Creek was slightly relocated and constructed to mitigate resource damage and provide improved recreation opportunities. The old crossing was difficult to locate, deeply eroded, dangerous to use, and had the potential to add sedimentation to Lusk Creek (Figure 5). In preparing the site for the new creek crossing, several uprooted large diameter trees were cleared by hand using a crosscut saw and axes (Figure 6). In addition, seventy-three (73) tons of soil was excavated by shovel from the embankment and uphill slopes and used to fill in deeply eroded ruts in the creek bank (Figures 7 and 8). Also, ninety-eight (98) tons of native sandstone was harvested from the surrounding area and carried by hand to the site in handmade chain baskets where it was used in the construction of steps and retaining walls to withstand seasonal creek flooding (Figures 9 and 10). To complete the crossing, eighteen (18) tons of red rock gravel mixture was hauled to the site by stock animals. A mule team, hired from the local area, hauled the 18 tons of gravel nearly one mile into the wilderness. The gravel was delivered to the wilderness boundary and then loaded by hand into two large gravel bags on each mule. The mules were lead to the crossing and unloaded by hand where the gravel was used to build steps (Figures 11 and 12). In addition to the 18 tons of red rock gravel, 200 feet of 10 – 12 inch diameter cedar logs were hauled by mule from the boundary to the crossing (Figure 13). The logs were used to form the 14 steps necessary to allow equestrians to walk stock animals up and down the creek embankments (Figure 14). The final construction resulted in 186 feet of new creek crossing to include the

approach to the creek embankments (Figures 15 and 16). In addition to the Bowed Tree Creek Crossing on Lusk Creek, the trail crew simultaneously completed the much smaller Little Bear Branch Creek Crossing adjacent to Lusk Creek.

**Trail work accomplished outside of wilderness areas in the Lusk Creek Watershed under the Trails Designation Project:**

- The trail crew conducted mechanized work with the trail dozer (sweco), mini-excavator, and a gravel hauler to begin construction of the re-route for trail section 481 from Frank's Tract south to the Lusk Creek Wilderness boundary. The original trail was deeply rutted due to its steep slope. The new half mile of reroute follows the natural contour of the land. This reroute is approximately 60% complete and will be ready for use in the fall.
- In addition, one and a quarter mile of new trail reroute was completed from the Wilson Tract Road to the location known as the Green Bucket in route to Petticoat Junction on Trail # 497.

**Planned project activities for September 2007:**

- Heavy equipment will continue to be used by the trail crew to reconstruct sections of trail outside the wilderness near the areas of Jackson Falls, Wilson Tract, Circle B Horse Ranch, and the area of Palestine Church. The trail crew will also work in the Lusk Creek Wilderness building additional reroutes and monitoring trail use. 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, outside of the wilderness, within the Lusk Creek, Eagle Creek, Big Grand Pierre Creek, and Upper Bay Creek watersheds. The directional signs will be mounted on posts located at trail entrances and junctions.



**Figure 1. Before. Switchback on Coyote Club reroute.**



**Figure 2. During. Switchback being reconstructed on the Coyote Club reroute.**



**Figure 3. After. Newly reconstructed switchback on the Coyote Club reroute. Rock steps, retaining wall, and erosion control features added.**



**Figure 4. Completed section of Coyote Club reroute.**



**Figure 5. Previous site of Bowed Tree Creek Crossing, view of east embankment on Lusk Creek. Old crossing was difficult to locate, deeply eroded, dangerous to use, and had the potential to add sedimentation to Lusk Creek.**



**Figure 6. In preparing the site for the new creek crossing, several uprooted large diameter trees were cleared by hand using a crosscut saw and axes.**



**Figure 7. Seventy-three (73) tons of soil was excavated by shovel from the embankment and uphill slopes and used to fill in deeply eroded ruts in the creek bank.**



**Figure 8. East embankment of Lusk Creek, soil was excavated to prepare for the installation of steps and retaining wall.**



**Figure 9. Ninety-eight (98) tons of native sandstone was harvested from the surrounding area and used in the construction of steps and retaining walls.**



**Figure 10. Native sandstone was used to build retaining walls to withstand seasonal creek flooding and to provide uphill drainage of rainwater runoff.**



**Figure 11. Eighteen (18) tons of red rock gravel mixture was hauled to the site by stock animals nearly one mile into the wilderness.**



**Figure 12. The red rock gravel mixture is used to build steps that will allow equestrians to safely cross the creek.**



**Figure 13. A total of 200 feet of 10 – 12 inch diameter cedar logs were hauled by mule from the wilderness boundary to the crossing.**



**Figure 14. The logs were used to form the 14 steps necessary to allow equestrians to walk stock animals up and down the creek embankments.**



**Figure 15. Before.** Location of creek crossing near Bowed Tree on Lusk Creek before reconstruction of proper crossing. Old crossing was difficult to locate, deeply eroded, dangerous to use, and had the potential to add sedimentation to Lusk Creek.



**Figure 16. After.** East embankment of newly reconstructed Bowed Tree Crossing, sandstone retaining walls will withstand seasonal creek flooding. Over time, the sandstone will collect sedimentation between the cracks and allow vegetation to grow resulting in a more naturalized appearance.