

**Shawnee National Forest
Hidden Springs Ranger District
Trails Designation Project Accomplishments
Months of March and April, 2007**

Trail work accomplished in the Lusk Creek Wilderness under the Trails Designation Project:

- During the month of March, the Hidden Springs Ranger District's trail crew worked with a team of mules and two Forest Service staff on detail from the Hoosier National Forest (NF) out of Indiana. Prior to the arrival of the mule team, the trail crew cleared the center line path of several re-routes (Figure 1). Brush and rocks were cleared by hand to allow the mules to pull a plow (Figure 2). The Hoosier team and the trail crew worked together with the mules to plow and grade the new re-routes (Figures 3 and 4). Each mule required two persons to direct, one to drive the mule, and the other to guide the implement. The plowing resulted in a rough cut for the trail tread, while the grading smoothed out the tread (Figures 5 and 6).

The work with the Hoosier mule team was expected to take one – two weeks, but the team completed their portion of the work in four days, plowing and grading nearly three miles of re-routes in the Lusk Creek Wilderness Area. This work could have taken a crew of ten working for weeks with just hand tools. The trail crew will need to continue to work on the re-routes providing the final touches with sloping during May and June (Figure 7). While the final work is being conducted, the re-routes are considered under construction and not open to use. Signs have been posted stating so, and the ends of the re-routes have been temporarily brushed-in 50 – 100 feet to discourage their use while under construction (Figure 8). The new re-routes will follow the natural contour of the terrain and help to eliminate sections of existing old trail currently in flat, muddy terrain.

Throughout the month of May and into early June, a team of eight mules and three Forest Service staff from the Bridger/Teton NF, out of Wyoming, will be on detail to the Shawnee NF. In addition, the Hoosier mule team will return with four mules throughout the same time period. The mule teams, while working in concert with the District's trail crew, will haul gravel into the Lusk Creek Wilderness. The gravel will be spread on sections of re-routes constructed last year, and those recently plowed and graded in March. The gravel will be spread on sections of trail to provide for suitable wet-weather riding. It is anticipated that several local equestrian volunteers will join with their stock animals to haul gravel.

- During the later part of March and into April, the trail crew continued to work on realigning small sections of the existing designated Goat Trail which leads to the Bowed Tree Crossing. This was accomplished to provide for improved

sustainability along the natural slope. Due to terrain restrictions, it was necessary to install several trail features. The installation of those features was accomplished with primitive tools and traditional methods according to wilderness principals. The trail crew accomplished the following: installation of a series of sandstone steps, to accommodate equestrian use, on approximately 50 feet of trail at a 20 percent slope (Figures 9 and 10); installed several rock crib retaining walls which involved the placement of approximately 15 tons of sandstone (Figures 11 – 13); installed 30 feet of turnpike made with natural materials (Figure 14); installed approximately 300 feet of new trail tread; and, used native material to brush-in approximately 400 feet of old eroded, non-designated user-created trail.

Also, the trail crew brushed-in approximately 100 feet of each end of the previous interim River-To-River Trail (001) section that begins east of the turnpikes and ends at the Guest Farm Creek Crossing on Lusk Creek. The old interim trail section was brushed-in to eliminate approximately one and a half miles of highly eroded, non-designated trail. The River-To-River Trail, to include the turnpike, now connects with the Goat Trail at the re-route leading to Bowed Tree Crossing.

In addition, the Sierra Club volunteered to conduct trail maintenance on April 24, 2007. Ten members of the club, and the trail crew, used native material to brush-in two miles of old non-designated trail in the area of Little Bear Branch between the Circle B Ranch and the Bowed Tree Crossing (Figures 15 and 16). Gully plugs were installed in eroded sections of trail where needed.

Planned project activities for May - June, 2007:

- The Bridger/Teton and Hoosier National Forest's mule teams will work with the District's trail crew to haul gravel into the Lusk Creek Wilderness. In addition, beginning approximately in mid-June, heavy equipment will be used by the trail crew to reconstruct sections of trail outside the wilderness.



Figure 1. Cleared center line along re-route of Trail 457 in Lusk Creek Wilderness.



Figure 2. District trail crew members continuing to clear center line of rocks.



Figure 3. District trail crew using Hoosier mule to plow the new trail tread.



Figure 4. Hoosier National Forest staff with their mules plowing new trail tread.

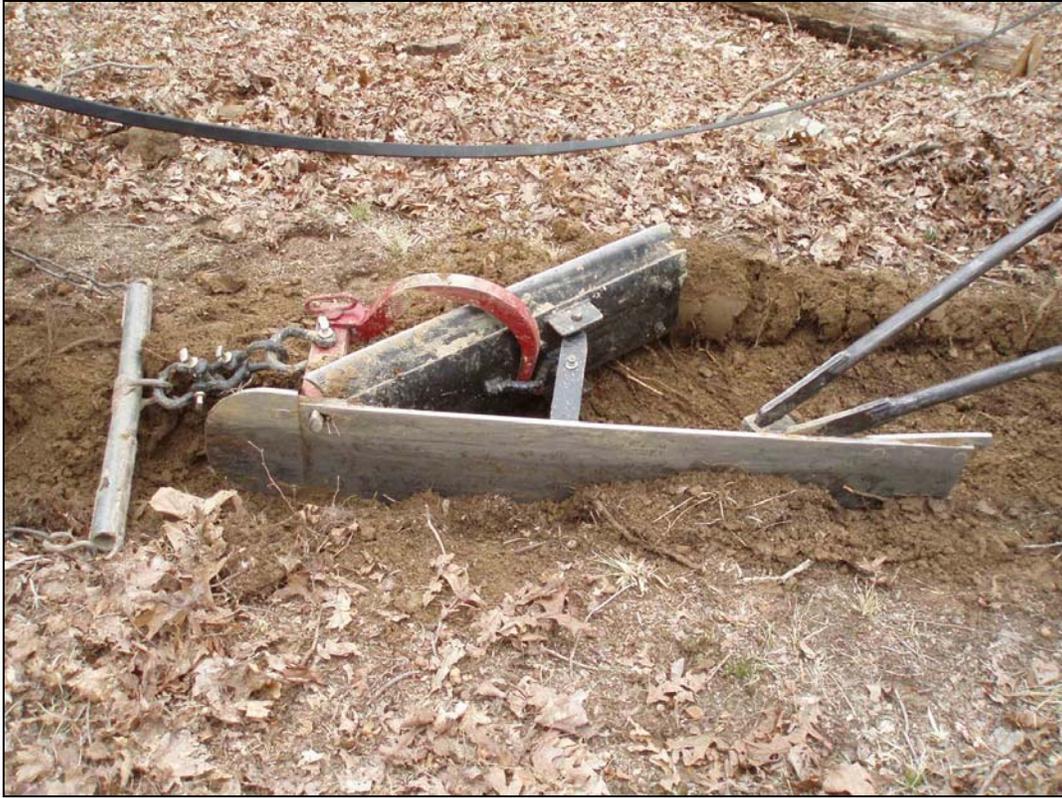


Figure 5. Grader used to smooth out the rough cut trail tread previously plowed.



Figure 6. Hoosier mule team and trail crew using the grader to smooth out tread.



Figure 7. Trail crew member using a hand tool to complete final detailed work on newly plowed and graded re-route.



Figure 8. The ends of the re-routes temporarily brushed-in 50 – 100 feet, and signed, to discourage use while under construction.



Figure 9. Trail crew members moving a sandstone block into place to build Goat Trail steps.



Figure 10. Native sandstone rock used to form the steps on the Goat Trail re-route.



Figure 11. Trail crew members using sandstone to install a cribbed retaining wall.



Figure 12. Cribbed retaining wall on the Goat Trail re-route.



Figure 13. Completed cribbed retaining wall on Goat Trail.



Figure 14. Recently installed turnpike on Goat Trail.



Figure 15. Sierra Club members brushed-in this section of non-designated trail.



Figure 16. Sierra Club and the District's trail crew brushing-in non-designated trail.