

**Shawnee National Forest  
Hidden Springs Ranger District  
Trails Designation Project Accomplishments  
Months of December 2007 - April 2008**

The following are highlights of trail work/activities in the month of **December 2007**:

- The trail crew attended the Forest Service Region Nine's 2007 Regional Awards Ceremony in Milwaukee. The crew was awarded the Honor Award for Traditional Skills and Minimum Tools Leadership for their trail work in the Lusk Creek Wilderness, under the Trails Designation Project (Figure 1). This was the second year in a row the crew received this award for their experience in using only primitive tools and traditional methods of trail construction in wilderness areas, in accordance with the Forest Service National Wilderness Policy.



**Figure 1. Trail Technician Brain Bourne (first row on the left) and members of the 2007 Trail Crew at the Region 9 Honor Awards in Milwaukee.**

In addition, the trail crew accomplished work in the Lusk Creek Wilderness:

- Hand tools were used to begin detailed hand work of the rough cut of re-routed Forest Service (FS) Trail 481B (Wishing Well Trail) (Figure 2). Approximately 1.25 miles of this trail was originally plowed in by mule; the hand work will define the slope, bench-cut, and erosion control features, such as outflow ditches.



**Figure 2. Trail crew using hand tools to complete work on 1.25 miles of re-routed FS Trail 481B (Wishing Well Trail).**

- Brushed in 0.25 mile of old, non-designated section of trail connecting FS Trail 425 to old, interim Coyote Club Trail route now closed.
- Brushed in short section of non-designated trail where users were short-cutting the switchback on Goat Trail, above Bowed Tree Creek Crossing on Lusk Creek.
- Conducted trail monitoring activities on December 13, 17, and 18. Trail Crew assessed the conditions of FS trails previously constructed and reconstructed, and those previously closed and brushed in (Figure 3). Trails monitored include those in the following areas: Blanchard Church Creek Crossing, Secret Canyon, Natural Bridge, Saltpeter Cave, Bowed Tree Creek Crossing, Owl Bluff, and Guest Farm Creek Crossing.



**Figure 3. Trail crew member recording monitoring observations at Salt Peter Cave in the Lusk Creek Wilderness.**

In non-designated wilderness areas:

- Assisted in conducting restoration work along the Observation Trail at the Garden of the Gods Recreation Area. Native materials (limbs and rock) were used to construct gully plugs for the purpose of arresting erosion caused by surface water runoff (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Limbs and rock were used to construct gully plugs.**

The following are highlights of trail work/activities in the month of **January 2008**:

Work accomplished in the Lusk Creek Wilderness, under the TDP, in accordance with the Forest Service National Wilderness Policy. This work included:

- The trail crew completed 1.25 miles of detailed hand work on the re-routed FS Trail 481B (Wishing Well Trail) (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. Approximately 1.25 miles of detailed hand work completed on re-routed FS Trail 481B (Wishing Well Trail).**

- The trail crew began detailed hand work on the rough cut of re-routed FS Trail 457. This re-route is located upslope on the east bank of Lusk Creek, just south of the Blanchard Church Creek Crossing (Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Trail Crew working on FS Trail 457, creating the back slope and bench cut.**

The following are highlights of trail work/activities in the month of **February 2008**:

- The trail crew completed 0.25 mile of detailed hand work on the rough cut of re-routed FS Trail 457 located south of Blanchard Church Creek Crossing upslope on the east bank of Lusk Creek.
- Sections of old, non-designated trail were brushed in near the junction of FS Trails 481 and 481B, east to County Road 1628, and south to trail junction 481/481A. This will eliminate approximately 0.5 mile of old, non-designated trail that has been re-routed.
- On February 10, 2008, the Forest received a half inch of freezing ice in an ice storm. As a result, miles of roads and trails throughout the Forest were impassable due to broken tree limbs and large mature trees being uprooted and blocking access. The trail crew spent weeks clearing these routes. Trails Technician Brain Bourne worked hard to certify his crew members in the safe and proper use of chainsaws and cross-cut saws. At times, miles of roads were cleared with chainsaws and heavy equipment just so that the crew could reach the trail heads (Figure 7). In the Lusk Creek Wilderness, the crew used cross-cut saws and axes to clear away storm debris (branches and trees) that were blocking the trail (Figure 8). Twenty-six miles of designated trail in the Lusk Creek Wilderness were cleared by hand. In non-wilderness areas, chainsaws and the trail dozer were used extensively to clear debris from approximately five miles of trail. Several trail heads were also cleared of storm damage. Help came from several outfitter equestrian camps that assisted in clearing trails. It is anticipated storm debris removal will continue for several months.



**Figure 7. Roads needed to be cleared before the crew could begin clearing the trails.**



**Figure 8. Trail crew member using an axe to clear storm debris in the wilderness.**

The following are highlights of trail work/activities in the month of **March 2008**:

- The trail crew continued clearing debris in wilderness and non-wilderness areas caused by February's ice storm. In addition, the trail crew worked to maintain trails in the Lusk Creek Wilderness that were inundated with rainwater runoff, due to flooding caused by heavy rains (Figure 9). These rains caused severe damage to roads and wide spread flooding across the District, often exceeding the 100-year flood zone.



**Figure 9. Trail crew clearing away flood debris from the Blanchard Church Creek Crossing in the Lusk Creek Wilderness.**

The following are highlights of trail work/activities in the month of **April 2008**:

- In preparations for spring and summer trail work, the trail crew was professionally trained in tree climbing for the purpose of rigging grip hoists (Figure 10). The hoists will be used this trail season to move heavy sandstones and logs for use in the construction of trail features. Crew members received this training, and certification, from instructors who were brought in from off the Forest.



**Figure 10. Trail crew practicing tree climbing.**

- In addition, the trail crew completed the detailed hand work on the previously plowed section of re-routed FS Trail 457, east of Blanchard Crossing; including finishing tread work and drainage crossing improvements (Figure 11).



**Figure 11. Section of FS Trail 457 with completed trail tread.**