

Trail Advocates

of the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mount Hood National Forest

Editors Only: [News Stories](#) [Pictures](#) [Files](#) [Shortcuts](#) [Discuss](#) [Logoff](#) [Help](#)

Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas

Topic: Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas

Author: Rob Williams

Topic Started: 2/8/2008; 7:26:16 PM

Last Posted: 2/10/2008; 1:21:51 PM

Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas

[Edit this Page](#)

Rob Williams : 2/8/2008; 6:26:16 PM

Reads: 222, Responses: 4 ([view responses to this item](#))

I wrote to Ron Wyden (and other congress critters), and received an interesting response from his office today. I'm assuming you know this information, but if not, I post it here (this is a quote from the letter-any typos are my fault):

Regarding the use of chainsaws or other mechanized tools for trail maintenance in designated wilderness areas, the Wilderness Act of 1964 as amended allows for the use of such tools under some limited circumstances. In situations in which the wilderness manager finds that the minimum tool that will suffice for a necessary action extends beyond the primitive tool requirements of the Wilderness Act, the manager may, following the United States Forest Service Minimum Requirement Decision Guide (MRDG), be granted an exception from the primitive tool requirement. This process has been utilized to permit the use of power tools, helicopters, fire and the construction of shelters as necessary for maintenance and other essential wilderness restoration or harm mitigation actions. I encourage you to visit <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=MRDG> for a detailed description of the MRDG process.

So, with the correct approval, it sounds like using chain saws is a possibility.....But it would take a little work and justification. I would think that an acceptable compromise would be allowing chain saws in wilderness areas every 3 years or so to clean up the damage caused in the preceding years. There is at least one sample on the above website that talks about reconstructing a trail after fire damage, but many of the arguments could be used for trail maintenance as well.

Link on FS guidelines: <http://www.wilderness.net/MRDG/documents>

Navigation

[Home](#)
[About](#)
[Trail Index](#)
[Get Involved](#)
[Hikes](#)

Discussion

[Chronological](#)
[By Topic](#)

Membership

[Sign Out](#)

[/MRDG_FWS_wilderness_policy.doc](#)

Link on trail reconstruction: <http://www.wilderness.net>

[/MRDG/documents/trail%20reconst_fire-structures-hel.doc](#)

Link on another trail reconstruction request: <http://www.wilderness.net>

[/MRDG/documents/trail_reconst_rock_%20drill.doc](#)

Interesting....

[Discuss this message.](#)

Re: Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas

Pete Giordano : 2/8/2008; 7:31:14 PM

Reads: 222, Responses: 1 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

That's good news!

[Discuss this message.](#)

Re: Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas

[Edit this Page](#)

Rob Williams : 2/9/2008; 7:39:02 AM

Reads: 232, Responses: 0 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

It isn't a slam dunk, but it is at least a possibility. I think a valid case can certainly be made to allow chainsaws into wilderness at least every few years to clean up the area. I'm no lawyer, but reading the regulations, it certainly seems like this would be allowable on a certain frequency.

[Discuss this message.](#)

Re: Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas**Donovan** : 2/10/2008; 11:55:22 AMReads: 234, Responses: 1 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Thank you for putting this out there. Three years ago we went around on this and the bottom line was that the need had to be presented as some kind of an emergency. It needed to be demonstrated that the need could not and would not be otherwise addressed. Also, it became clear that who ever approved the request, District Ranger, if qualified, or Supervisor, could be subject to a blow torch of reaction from those whose vision of the wilds includes no trails, creating a certain political sensitivity.

Again, thanks for these documents. These will be useful for anyone urging an exemption for the chainsaw as an essential aide in keeping the trails clear.

I did find the point about keeping the trails in good repair a boon in protecting the ecosystems interesting. It is noteworthy that peoples routes around fallen trees trample vegetation and damage the homes of creatures who would not have been disturbed had people been able to keep to the long compacted trail.

If Bull of the Woods goes another year without maintenance, (excepting 544 and Elk Lake Creek which have been "adopted"), we should probably unfold a united effort to get an exemption.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Trail Maintenance and Wilderness areas**[Edit this Page](#)**Rob Williams** : 2/10/2008; 12:21:51 PMReads: 226, Responses: 0 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

According to the FS guidelines, one of the conditions of wilderness is as follows:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation:

Not having a reasonably accessible trail reduces this opportunity.

There is also other considerations in some of the samples (recreation, scenic)

F. Describe Effects to the Public Purposes of Wilderness

Is it necessary to take administrative action in support of the public purposes for wilderness (as stated in Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act) of **recreation, scenic,** scientific, education, conservation, and historical use?

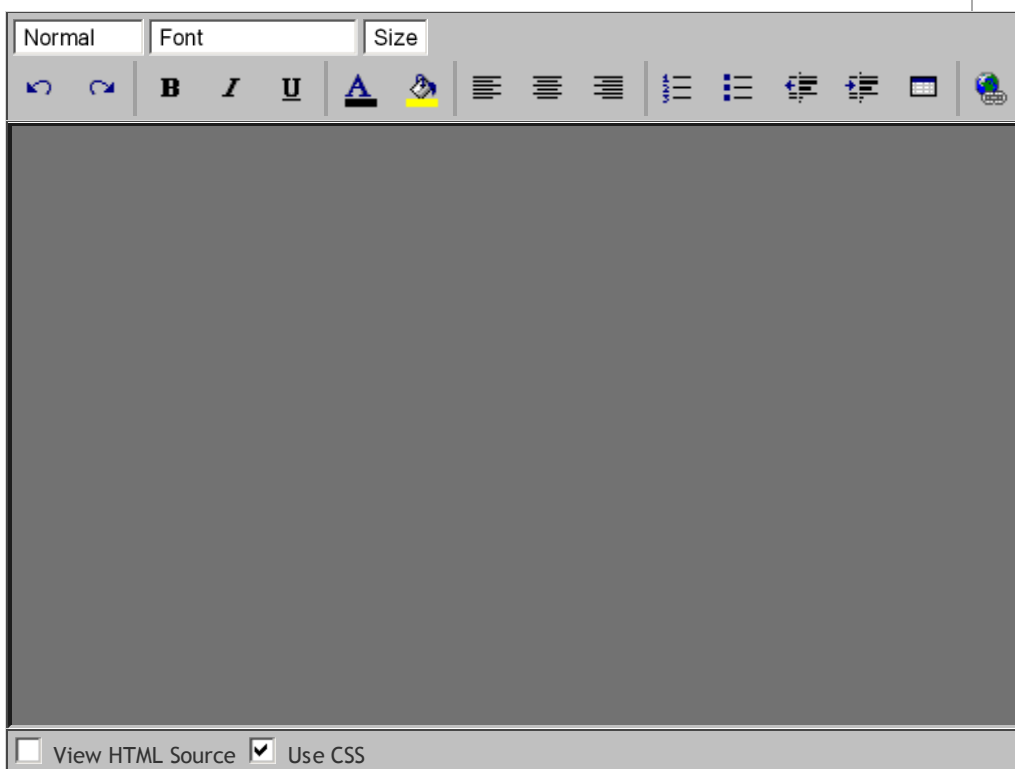
You could even argue an educational use, as allowing people into these areas can facilitate education on natural areas.

Sometimes the best way to confront "the system" is to use their own rules against them..... :)











Rob

[Discuss this message.](#)

Response text:



Normal Font Size

  **B** *I* U        

View HTML Source Use CSS

Post Response

This Page was last updated: Sunday, February 10, 2008 at 1:21:51 PM
Copyright 2009 [Trail Advocates](#)

[XML](#)