

# Trail Advocates

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

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## Wilderness Areas and Trails

**Topic:** Wilderness Areas and Trails

**Author:** Pete Giordano

**Topic Started:** 3/27/2006; 1:31:41 PM

**Last Posted:** 4/13/2006; 9:15:27 AM

### Wilderness Areas and Trails

**Pete Giordano** : 3/27/2006; 12:31:41 PM

Reads: 101, Responses: 14 ( [view responses to this item](#))

Don't you think in the long-term, wilderness designation for places in the Clackamas District is better for the hiking experience? Seems like logging and road building is a bigger threat to the trail system.

Just my thoughts.

pete

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Robert Koscik** : 3/27/2006; 1:10:52 PMReads: 84, Responses: 2 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

It's a difficult decision, and a double edged sword. A lot of the Clacky has been forgotten, neglected since it's "glory days", and only thru the hands of a couple very dedicated volunteers have some spectacular trails been restored from the temperate jungle. It takes a lot of work and love to not only find these trails, but bring them back to useful condition. Due to lack of manpower, most of this work wouldn't be possible without machinery - i.e. chainsaws.

So, we have a newly expanded wilderness, something in shorter supply these days due to overpopulation and exploitation of our wild places. But, humans want to go there. Unless funding is restored to the Forest Service's trail maintenance department (highly unlikely in view of our current administration), this access work must be done by volunteers. A handful with chainsaws can barely do the necessary seasonal clearing and repair work. A handful with crosscut saws can not.

Personally speaking, I am in favor of wilderness designation. Politics from great distances can be troubling for our forests, as viewed by our past logging practices. Parts of the Clackamas District are heartbreaking. However, gigantic areas are primitive, untouched, and spectacular. I understand both sides of the debate: some are fearful, some are trusting. But polarization helps no one, compromise is the greatest product of a democracy. There must be a satisfactory way for the work to get done in our wilderness areas; at the very least, more volunteers will be needed in the near future to pick up the slack. What actually occurs will truly be society's barometer wheter the \$\$ has been placed firmly in mouth, or has found it's way to some other, less tasteful location.

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Donovan** : 3/27/2006; 5:19:38 PMReads: 91, Responses: 10 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

No. The District is already behind on Bull of the Woods trails. These will be added to the bottom of the list.

Furthermore, the Draft Proposal includes areas with roads and clearcuts which will isolate about 12 trailheads and access points. People will need to walk miles of closed road before they get to the trail. Old roads themselves become difficult to negotiate without work.

To keep the trails up, we need to limit the expansion to truly Roadless areas and we need a chainsaw exemption, exempted trail right-of-ways, or some similar provision that will allow the cost-effective maintenance of effected trails.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Robert Koscik** : 3/28/2006; 7:41:55 AMReads: 88, Responses: 0 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

On a positive note, some of the lesser used lower elevation trails could now be used as access points to the higher country. It's sort of like taking a few steps back in time. Perhaps pack mules would again become vogue?? Waxed handlebar mustaches?

Once the smoke clears, it will be interesting to see what actually transpires. The Portland area is run on volunteer labor. With all this publicity surrounding the wilderness expansion, it may provide the perfect vehicle to get the word out: more volunteer labor is needed. I for one had no idea that most trail maintenance in the district is volunteer, and I'm sure I'm not alone.

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Pete Giordano** : 3/28/2006; 9:13:00 AMReads: 103, Responses: 8 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

From the maps it looks like we are mainly talking about impacts on the Roaring River drainage and the logging roads that lead onto the ridge above the South Fork. In my mind, the benefits of strong wilderness protection for this area outweighs the inconvenience of closed roads. If in the future the Roaring River drainage was logged (never say never) why would I want to hike down in there anyway?

Let's take Fish Cr. drainage as an example. The road removal sure made the area harder to access and that has been a bummer. But on the other hand, now when I hike in there and see all the many, many clearcuts, at least I can picture how the forest might look sometime in the future. This makes it an attractive place to come back to. Plus, as far as I know, people have found work-around solutions for trail access that aren't all that bad. There will always be some easy-to-access trails in other places. Plus, I'm positive the lack of cars in the Fish Cr. drainage has decreased the amount of garbage, vandalism, and resource destruction in that area. You only have to look at what occurs along the Abbott Road to see what could happen in areas like that.

I agree that chainsaw exemptions should be made for trail maintenance or it should be done on the sly.

pete

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Donovan** : 3/29/2006; 5:45:10 PMReads: 103, Responses: 7 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Using a chainsaw "on the sly" as you suggest is completely unacceptable and a Federal offense.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Pete Giordano** : 4/2/2006; 8:27:21 PMReads: 89, Responses: 6 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

That's why I would suggest trying to work out an exemption with the Forest Service.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Donovan** : 4/4/2006; 3:57:59 PMReads: 88, Responses: 5 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Have looked into it. Exemptions are allowed, if at all, for emergency situations -- rescue, fire, etc.. While a possible mechanism may exist, it is not supported by precedent. It is almost certainly not possible for seasonal trail maintenance.

Altering the boundaries makes the most sense. Many roads and clearcuts are included in the draft proposal for Eagle Creek and Roaring River. These are not wilderness quality lands and they contain much of our trail mileage and many trail heads. Excluding these area would help immensely.

I am doing the best I can to preserve our current trail maintenance capabilities for all the affected trails. If we lose, I will be watching closely for supporters of this unfortunate (for our District) plan to arrive weekly with their finely honed crosscut saws.

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Pete Giordano** : 4/4/2006; 9:58:20 PMReads: 89, Responses: 4 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Donovan,

Where are you getting specific boundary maps for the proposed areas? I've only been able to find some pretty broad maps that don't really get down into the nitty-gritty details. I'd like to see access preserved as much as possible but also think protecting adjacent lands that could develop into wilderness would be nice as well. I'm certainly all for keeping hiking access reasonable and not just closing off large sections of forest with no thought towards the best way to provide access for people.

Unfortunately I think you are probably right about the possibility for chainsaw exemptions for trail maintainence. I think that is a shame but probably reality.

I've asked before but what do you think the most useful tool to carry would be if you couldn't add much weight? I hike some of the Roaring River trails with a kayak and wouldn't mind doing some work along the way but don't know what is best. Lopers for brush, pick-axe for trail work, etc.

pete

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Donovan** : 4/7/2006; 2:25:26 PMReads: 111, Responses: 3 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

An accurate map has not been available to the public. I am referred to Hillary Barbour at Congressman Blumenauer's office who appears to be keeper of the maps.

I overlaid an enlarged version of the available map.

The facts are that the vast majority of people who support securing wilderness lands never enter them so access or trail conditions do not matter to them.

The best tool depends on the trail. 517 down to the river from 4611 needs some tread levelling. A Pulaski is helpful for that. Also useful for small cutting and rolling out broken up snags. 507 needs brush removal bad in the lower mile and a half. Loppers would be the best there. The rhododendrons need to be mercilessly cut back. Four feet each side is good. With rhodies and vine maple there is no reason not to cut them back as far as possible. Both of these root when snow lays them down and the limbs make contact with the ground. A good hack back will last for about five years.

PS 4611 is open to 517 now.

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Tom Kloster** : 4/7/2006; 7:04:30 PMReads: 108, Responses: 0 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

This is a question for Donovan, since you seem very knowledgeable about the limits on trail construction and maintenance for wilderness areas: would a wilderness designation make it more difficult than the current USFS management classification to re-route or re-grade existing trails, or add new trails? Beyond the issue of equipment and access to trailheads, I'm wondering if the wilderness designaton would essentially freeze the current Roaring River network as it exists today.

My presumption is no, based on new trails with the Mount Hood Wilderness, but I'm wondering if these were only constructed to replace existing routes under a narrow definition. Thanks-

Tom Kloster

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### Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails

**Tom Kloster** : 4/7/2006; 7:11:32 PM

Reads: 88, Responses: 1 ( [view responses to this item](#))

Robert, You mentioned restored funding, and that is one of the more intriguing parts of the Mount Hood bill: the idea of keeping revenue that is generated within the forest for local recreation programs. There's a tremendous potential to offset backcountry trail maintenance costs with the charges to park at the highly visited trailheads in the Gorge and on Mount Hood. While there has been plenty of griping about the Northwest Trail Pass, in the end it could be both a demand management tool for overused sites, as well as a revenue source for less used areas. Rep. Blumenauer's background in transportation gives him a particularly good understanding of this dynamic, so I'm optimistic that it could establish a sustainable approach that helps the volunteers out on maintenance.

Tom Kloster

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Pete Giordano** : 4/8/2006; 8:08:51 AMReads: 101, Responses: 1 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

I use 507 a few times a year and I could bring some lopers the next time down. I think I know the problem section you refer to. Might be up there in the next few days if the rains keep up.

I would think that wilderness designation could be a potential source of more trail users with the right marketing. I think Roaring River gets overlooked by the general public because they don't realize that it already is essentially wilderness.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails****Robert Koscik** : 4/13/2006; 8:05:50 AMReads: 97, Responses: 0 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

I hope your right. Right now, it doesn't seem like the funding is equally distributed. All the current Forest Pass revenue seems to go to 1 or 2 expensive high profile projects, while many other areas are neglected. Also, it seems like recreation in the Clackamas District is at a lower profile than the Gorge or areas around Mt. Hood. In some ways, that's great, because I just don't enjoy the lack of wildness in some of those areas, leave them to the tourists, keep the Clackamas in a more primitive state.

I also tend to agree with Donovan regarding the proposed wilderness boundary. It should be further North, and not all the way down to 224. Mixed use makes sense down below, with wilderness up on top. I was recently out of district at the east end of Badger Creek, where more proposed wilderness is supposed to occur. While the area is indeed wild, there were a gazillion hunters driving around the "wilderness" area, and I'd be willing to bet they're local. Also, they'd be pretty pissed if they weren't allowed to go to a place they've been going for many years. We need to respect what is already happening in these areas before something is decided in an office somewhere, far away from reality.

However, I DON'T support the past willy-nilly logging practices. We need to be more aware and sustainable in many aspects of American life, especially considering the tremendous population growth occurring globally.

Thank you, I'm Bill Moyers signing off.

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**Re: Wilderness Areas and Trails**












**Robert Koscik** : 4/13/2006; 8:15:27 AM

Reads: 110, Responses: 0 ( [view responses to this item](#))

Re the Roaring River country: due to it's wildness, there aren't too many areas for developed recreation or trails in the area. It's really some primitive country up there! There are a few pocket wildernii near the coast like that - Gold Beach, Rock Creek, etc. - no trails, just very wild country. It's good to have a few places still like that where people are definately just visitors. A healthy contrast to all this physical noise that's part of our daily urban ramblings.

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