

LAC STEP 9 – IMPLEMENT ACTION & MONITOR CONDITIONS

Implementation of some management actions can be relatively easy such as increasing education about Leave No Trace ethics or obliterating illegal campsites. Other actions will be more complex and time consuming such as relocating user trails out of poor locations, designating new system trails, designating trails open to equestrians, designating campsites, and developing a climbing management plan.

Certain management actions can begin immediately in 2009:

- **Employing Student Conservation Association (SCA) backcountry rangers to increase Leave No Trace (LNT) education, obliterate illegal campsites, and remove trash.** Funding has been obtained to hire SCA backcountry rangers during the 2009 field season.
- **Implement the new DBNF Interpretive and Conservation Education Plan.** Through staff at the Gladie Center, an increase in education efforts aimed at reducing impacts from visitors will occur. Specifically, impacts to be addressed through education include those areas where LAC standards have been exceeded. These include, but are not limited to, campsite proliferation, improper disposal of human waste, and damage to trees at campsites.

Other LAC management actions will require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and documentation.

- Instead of doing a large NEPA document to cover a wide variety of management actions, the DBNF has decided to implement LAC projects on a piece meal approach. Small NEPA documents will be prepared to implement management actions.
- **The first NEPA project will be to propose designating campsites along Tunnel Ridge Road.**

Other high priority management actions include:

- **Continue to propose designating campsites** throughout Red River Gorge in order to meet LAC standards for campsite density as well as legality. The next priority area after Tunnel Ridge Road, should be Indian Creek Road. Most campsites along Indian Creek are within 300' of the roads, so there is a need for officially designated campsites. Thereafter, priority areas should be Chimney Top Road, Rock Bridge Road, and campsites along system trails.
- **Propose the establishment of designated parking areas** along roads in the RRG such as in place now along Tunnel Ridge Road. Parking will be limited to those designated areas and enforced with a Forest Supervisors Order. Priority will be Chimney Top Road.
- **Propose a re-aligned system trail network** in RRG. Nearly 200 miles of user-developed trails were documented in the RRG during the LAC inventory. Some of these user trails are so heavily used that permanent closure is highly unlikely. LAC addressed these issues by zoning certain corridors as Semi-Primitive to allow the possibility of future system trails. In nearly every case, a proposed system trail already has a documented user trail. There are three main categories for re-aligned system trails:
 - 1) **hiking trails** (such as Indian Stairway, Eagle Peak, Swift camp Creek extension)
 - 2) **climbing access trails** (similar to existing system climbing access trails to Military Wall & Left Flank)
 - 3) **system trails** open to equestrian use (LAC identified 6 loops to propose for equestrian use)
- **Finish proposed action to reduce impacts at Military Wall** climbing area. Military Wall is the most popular climbing area in the RRG and has the largest amount of area exceeding LAC standards. An NEPA analysis was begun on this project in 2004. Military Wall will become the blueprint for work at other climbing areas in the RRG.

Develop specific Management Plans to help guide LAC implementation:

- **Camping strategy** – this will help give guidance to where and how to designate official campsites.
- **Climbing management plan** – this will help guide management of climbing in the RRG. This document will go into detail about how climbers can apply for permission to develop new climbing routes, the relationship between USFS and Red River Gorge Climbers Coalition, how sensitive resources will be protected at climbing areas etc....
- **Visitor feedback mechanism** – step 6 of LAC lists a variety of social standards. Many of these standards refer to developing a way to learn and monitor visitor satisfaction with social indicators.

Amend or create new Forest Supervisor Orders:

- The existing order on no camping within 300' of roads and system trails currently applies only to the Geological Area boundary. This needs to be expanded to the boundaries of LAC (include west side of Tunnel Ridge Road and Indian Creek area). The wording also needs to be amended to allow designated sites within 300' (assuming For Sup concurs).
- The existing order on no camping within 100' of base of cliffs or in rockshelters currently applies only to the Geological Area boundary. This needs to be expanded to the boundaries of LAC (include west side of Tunnel Ridge Road and Indian Creek area). The wording also needs to be amended to allow designated sites within the 100'.
- There needs to be a new Forest Supervisor Order to require a permit prior to the development of any new cliffline recreation areas (climbing, rappelling, bouldering) that include: permanent installation of safety devices such as bolts; construction of access trails; or clearing of vegetation. This requirement is a standard in the Forest Plan.
- There needs to be a new Forest Supervisor Order to prohibit new rock climbing routes in Clifty Wilderness with fixed anchors. This prohibition is a standard in the Forest Plan.
- There needs to be a new Forest Supervisor Order that will detail proper management of newly designated campsites (ie visitors must camp within certain boundaries, maintain campfire in official metal fire rings,
- There needs to be a new Forest Supervisor Order to designate certain system trails open to equestrian use (after these trails meet FS trail standards) within the LAC area. The order needs to restrict horses to those trails open to equestrian use. This prohibition is a standard in the Forest Plan.
- There needs to be a new Forest Supervisor Order to limit parking to designated parking areas along other roads within LAC area (already established for Tunnel Ridge Road). This can be implemented after official parking areas have been identified.