



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

National Forests in North Carolina
Uwharrie National Forest
Uwharrie Ranger District

789 Hwy 24/27 East
Troy, NC 27371
910-576-6391 phone
910-576-4171 fax

File Code: 1950

Date: March 22, 2019

Dear Uwharrie National Forest User

Re: Rocky Mountain Loop Trail Segment Closure and Rehabilitation Project Environmental Assessment (EA)

Identified in the SOPA as: Kodak Rock OHV Trail Closure EA

Weblink: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50080>

The Uwharrie National Forest is proposing to permanently close, decommission, and stabilize the Kodak Rock and Lower Ledge sections of the Rocky Mountain Loop Trail (TR92) from its junction with the Slab Pile Trail (TR79) to its junction with the Sawmill Trail (TR93) (approximately 0.85 mile total). The Uwharrie National Forest has identified this action in order to move the trail out of a sensitive resource area and stabilize the highly eroded section between Slab Pile Trail and Kodak Rock. No dispersed camping, equestrian or mountain bike riding, or motorized vehicle use would be allowed in the closed area. Other alternatives not considered in detail were costly and did not sufficiently meet the need for protection of natural and cultural resources. The attached EA includes the analysis for the proposed action.

The 0.35-mile section hill climb from the junction with Slab Pile Trail (TR79) up to Kodak Rock would be stabilized by installing erosion control and drainage control structures and by filling in the eroded trail with rock and soil. The 0.5 mile segment from Kodak Rock north to the trail junction with Sawmill Trail will revegetate naturally and be covered with slash where needed, with minimal ground disturbance, to protect the archaeological site and discourage further recreation use. The total closure length for Rocky Mountain Loop Trail is 0.85 miles from Slab Pile Trail to Sawmill Trail. Permanent barriers would be placed at the junctions of this segment of trail with Slab Pile Trail and Sawmill Trail, with additional wooden guiderails and signage installed to further strengthen the closure to vehicles, biking, equestrian use, and dispersed camping.

All existing rails and fencing near Kodak Rock installed previously by volunteers would be removed and the postholes filled with sand per agreement with NC State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The closure would be monitored by FS presence, especially during high-use OHV weekends. Archaeologists and other relevant disciplinary specialists would use on-site observation and existing photo monitoring points located along the trail to track any ongoing damage and the effectiveness of rehabilitation, and develop additional strategies as needed for resource protection. This 0.85-mile portion of the trail would be decommissioned and removed from the trail system. This action would result in a total loop of approximately 4.55 miles of easy to moderate technical challenge to OHV recreationists.

The project area is in the Badin Lake Recreation Area approximately 15 miles northwest of Troy in Montgomery County, North Carolina. The attached map shows the location of the proposed trail closure.



I encourage your participation during this 30-day notice and comment period. Following the comment period, I will be publishing a draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The proposed project is an activity implementing the Uwharrie NF Land and Resource management plan and is subject to the pre-decisional objection process at 36 CFR §218 Subparts A and B. The opportunity to object will begin with the publication of the draft Decision Notice and FONSI.

Specific written comments as defined by §218.2 should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure that their comments are received in a timely manner. For organizations, a signature or other means of identification verification must be provided for the individual authorized to represent your organization.

The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in The Montgomery Herald. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity during a public comment period established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection §218.24(b)(6). For issues to be raised in objections, they must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to submit written comments on a proposed project or activity.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc, .docx) to comments-southern-north-carolina-uwharrie@fs.fed.us. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request §218.24(b)(8). Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on these proposed actions and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents or standing for administrative review.

Written comments must be submitted to:

Theresa Savery, District Recreation Staff Officer
Uwharrie National Forest
789 NC Highway 24/27 East
Troy, NC 27371
tsavery@fs.fed.us

Sincerely,



MICHAEL SPISAK
District Ranger, Uwharrie Ranger District

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST ROCKY MOUNTAIN LOOP CLOSURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT MAP

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- Rocky Mountain Loop Closure - 0.5 Miles
- Multi-Use Trail
- Stream
- Road
- Power
- TR_Low

Olive Jones
GIS Editor
11/30/2018

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