

Tenderfoot Mountain Motorcycle Trail System

2015 Accomplishments

Introduction

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) and National Forest Foundation (NFF) grant funds and Wildlife funds were received for the Tenderfoot Mountain Motorcycle Trail System project. A great deal of work was accomplished; however, the amount of trail construction was less than anticipated.

Trail Construction

A 4-person OHV crew was hired and they worked June through mid-October, 2015. Referring to the map at the end of this document, they worked on the Wide Open Trail and completed the segment between points 8 and 13 (approximately 1 mile). This will allow for the existing trail from point 13 to 63 to be opened up summer 2016, completing a loop. This will be about 1.5 miles of new trail available in the trail network. The 3-person Colorado Statewide OHV crew constructed about 50 feet of turnpike through a wet section of this trail. An 8-person Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Crew (RMYC) spent 5 days cutting trees in the trail corridor. They were funded by the National Forest Foundation. The District Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) crew spent 2 days and two District trails staff spent a day clearing trees.



A section of the Wide Open Trail constructed by the District OHV crew



Turnpike constructed by the Colorado Statewide OHV Crew.

Friends of the Dillon Ranger District (FDRD) led a project on Public Lands Day (September 26, 2015) and constructed the trail segment between points 75 and 38 (about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile). The District received OHV grant funds to purchase a Bobcat mini-excavator which was used for the initial excavation and was used to improve drainage on an old roadbed in this section. In 2015, the Colorado Statewide OHV crew constructed the segment between points 74 and 75. This will enable the Moab trail between points 38 and 74 to be opened for use summer 2016 (about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile).



FDRD volunteers constructed the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile Knobby Trail.

FDRD led two volunteer projects with Summit County Off-Road Riders (SCORR) on the Powerline Loop Trail. About 50 feet of turnpike was constructed through a wet area. Stumps created in summer 2015 from tree removal along the edge of the trail were removed by the volunteers. Much of the construction of this trail was accomplished with a FDRD / SCORR project in 2015. SCORR volunteers contributed 120 hours of labor in 2015. The trail was opened up for use this summer (about 1.2 miles).



Turnpike constructed by SCORR volunteers.

A 2-day Volunteers for Outdoor (VOC) project occurred on August 15 and 16, 2015. About 1/3 mile of the Tenderfoot Mountain Trail (points 83 to 79) was completed. This trail ties into a 1/2 mile trail segment that was constructed by the District fire crew in 2014. This trail segment was not planned for 2015, but it was chosen for work this year because of the easy access.

The Tenderfoot Mountain Road (66.2B) was closed and rehabilitated using about \$40,000 of Forest Service wildlife funding. Heavy equipment was used to rip, re-contour, and re-seed about two miles of road. This closure was identified in the Environmental Assessment of the project as needed to protect fish and wildlife habitat. The work was completed by District staff, the Forest road crew, and FDRD volunteers (who planted trees and placed debris on the closed

road). This is by far the largest and most important of the route closures identified in the EA. Ashley Nettles (District Wildlife Biologist) secured the funding and coordinated the project.

The OHV mini excavator was used to construct ½ mile of ATV trail (Points 73 to 24). An existing single-track trail was widened to allow for big game hunting motorized access (because of the closure of Road 66.2B). Several waterbars on the 662A Road were constructed or improved. This work was completed by District staff.

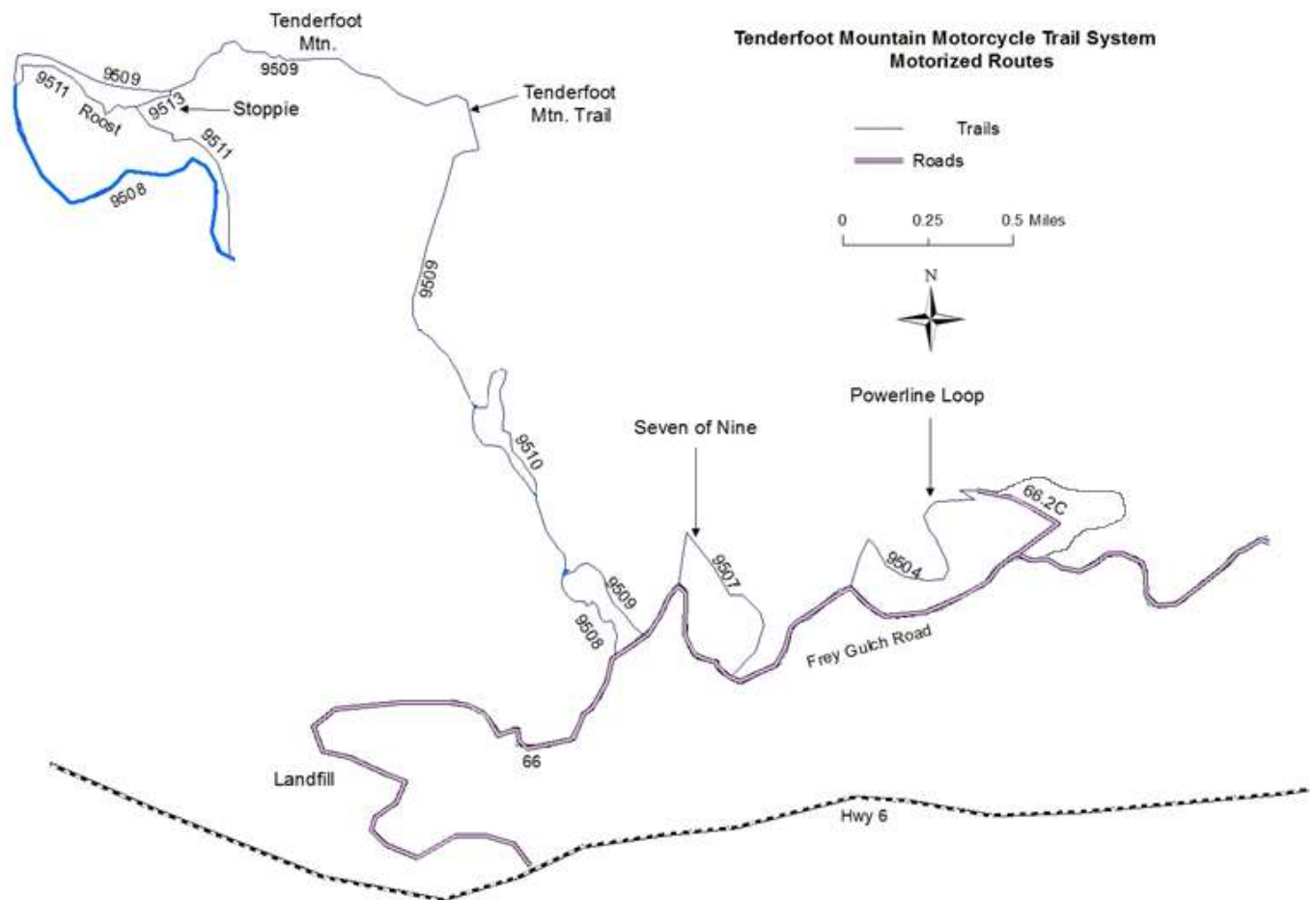


ATV trail constructed by District Staff using a mini-excavator

A one-half acre trailhead was constructed on the Frey Gulch road. Road base was purchased and delivered. The Forest Road Crew leveled the area, then placed and compacted the road base. Two rollers were rented for the compaction. A 3-panel kiosk had already been constructed at this location in 2014. Five hundred feet of road behind the trailhead was also closed and rehabilitated. The trailhead was used by an off highway motorcycle enthusiast less than two hours after construction was completed.



An off-highway motorcycle enthusiast uses the newly constructed trailhead on the Frey Gulch Road



Map of the trail system that will be open to motorized use in 2016. The blue line (9508) was constructed in 2015.

The District Trails staff contributed an additional 150 hours of labor to supplement the OHV grant funded crew.

Completed Trails:

- Wide Open (9508) – 1 mile
- Powerline (9504) – 1.2 miles
- Moab (66.2C)– 0.8 miles
- Tenderfoot Mountain (9509) – 0.3 miles

Total Single Track constructed – 3.3 miles.

Total ATV Trail constructed – 0.5 miles

The ATV trail and trailhead were accomplished as planned. The District fell far short of the 6 mile singletrack goal. The following is a list of factors that contributed to the lower than estimated production:

- **VOC Project** – One mile of new trail was expected to be built. Because the recruitment effort by SCORR was unsuccessful, only 45 volunteers participated the first day and 20 the second day. One hundred volunteers were expected each day. Only 1/3 mile of trail was completed.
- **Colorado Statewide Crew** – In 2014, this crew completed ½ mile of new trail and it was anticipated they would do the same in 2015, but the crew was needed to construct a turnpike that was not planned. An area at a very small stream crossing that had been identified as only needing a culvert, was wetter than anticipated, therefore, the crew spent 6 days constructing a 50-foot turnpike.
- **SCORR** – A similar situation occurred on the Powerline trail. With heavy bark beetle mortality and less ground moisture absorbed by trees, a previously dry area became wetter over the last few years. Fifty feet of new turnpike was needed so two FDRD / SCORR volunteer project days consisted of this structure instead of an anticipated construction of ½ mile of trail.
- **Tree / Stump removal** – When the initial flagline was put in on the Wide Open Trail, it was anticipated that existing openings in the forested areas would be used, however, in order to maximize drainage (e.g., using reverse in grades) and to provide challenge (e.g., turns and features), many (mostly dead) trees had to be cut. Where stumps were located in the trail tread, they had to be dug out and removed. A come-along, grip hoist, and hand tools were used to pull out the stumps. This process was very time consuming and slowed production. The OHV trail crew leader was chainsaw certified. When he was needed for saw work, he was not available for trail tread construction.
- **Organic soil** – Many sections of the Wide Open Trail had a deep organic soil layer. Often times, large quantities of organic soil had to be removed to get down to the mineral soil level. In this case, borrow pits had to be dug to import mineral soil. This process was very time consuming and slowed production.
- **Travel time** - Work was begun in June on the Wide Open Trail because it was located outside of the Frey Gulch area where activities were restricted until after July 1 (because

of elk calving). Because of the reasons listed above, the construction of this trail took all summer. It was decided to continue work on this trail to the junction with another trail so it could be opened for use next summer. The Wide Open Trail is in a remote area. Travel time to and from the project site was about 90 minutes each day.

- **RMYC** - The chainsaw crew was very inexperienced and cut only about 50 trees in a week. Initially, a RMYC crew was planned to construct about 1/4 mile of trail, but once the higher chainsaw workload was identified, a saw crew was requested instead.
- **Fire Crew work** – In 2014, the District 4-person engine crew was able to spend several days constructing trail. They worked on the segment between 66 and 82 and completed almost 1/2 mile. It was anticipated that the crew would be able to repeat that effort in 2015, but it was a very busy wildfire season nationally and the crew was not available for local project work.

Solutions to Address Slow Production

The factors that lead to slower production can be expected to continue in 2016 (and beyond). The following will be pursued to address this shortfall:

RMYC - Funding for RMYC crews in 2016 and 2017 will be pursued. Funding for one crew week in 2016 has already been committed using other NFF Ski Conservation Fund grant funding. The work for the 2016 4-person OHV grant-funded trail construction crew has already been identified and flagged on the ground. 8-10 person RMYC crews could work under the direction and side-by-side with the trail crew. In order to make up for the 2.2 mile shortfall in 2015 and to avoid falling further behind, the use of these crews will be essential. Potential funding sources include the National Forest Foundation's Ski Conservation Fund and the Climax Mine and Denver Water grant programs. CPW was not able to make any additional OHV grant funding available through the 2015 Tenderfoot construction grant. The Dillon Ranger District has worked very well with RMYC over the years. In 2015, 22 crew weeks were coordinated by the District staff. This is the equivalent of 2 crews every week, all summer long.

Mini-Excavator - Now that the District has a mini-excavator provided by the OHV grant program, some trails in the Tenderfoot Mountain Motorcycle Trail System can have the initial excavation accomplished using this equipment. The Mini-excavator width is 39 inches which is only three inches beyond the planned clearing corridor (openings in the trees). Work done with this equipment in the Golden Horseshoe project was very successful. The trail tread widths were 20-24 inches which are acceptable (not considered too wide). Production rates will be greatly increased where this equipment is used. Tree stumps and large rocks can be removed in a fraction of the time it takes by hand.



Trail constructed in the Golden Horseshoe in 2015 using the mini-excavator for the initial work

VOC – Unfortunately, VOC has indicated they are not interested in a project in 2016 because of the extremely low turnout for the 2015 project.

2017 OHV Grant Proposal – A larger crew (6-person) and funding for RMYC crews has been requested in the next grant cycle (for work in 2017).

Plans for 2016

In 2016, the target is four miles of trail construction and at least one mile of trail closure. There are about four miles of closed trail rehabilitation still to be completed. More than 75% of the trail closures in the proposed action have already been completed. In addition to the 4-person construction crew, the OHV grant funded 2-person maintenance / patrol crew will work regularly in the area. Depending on grant funding, target for trail construction and closure may be exceeded.

Ken Waugh
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**Figure 2.4 - Proposed Action Map
(without Topography)**

