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Monongahela
National Forest

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Route To: Assistant Forest Supervisors: Richard J. Cook & Kimberley Johnson
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Ranger, & Liz M. Schuppert

Subject: **Recreation Monitoring of the Props Run Trail
Fiscal Year 2000 Review & Evaluation**

To: Forest Supervisor

As part of the Forest's annual monitoring efforts, the following individuals participated in the monitoring of the Props Run Trail on August 3, 2000:

Interdisciplinary Team

Title

Tom Cain

Forest Fisheries Biologist

Tim Henry

Assistant District Ranger, Marlinton/WS RD

Lynn Hicks

Forest Engineer

Laura Hise

Assistant Forest Planner

Gary Willison

Former Forest Planner

Location

The Props Run Trail is a 6.6-mile trail that travels from FR 24 to the base of Gauley Mountain, at Slatyfork, WV (Map 1, Vicinity Map, in the project file). It is in the Props Run Opportunity Area (OA #46.103) and governed by Forest-wide and Management Prescription 6.1 direction of the *Monongahela National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan)*, see standards/guidelines identified on the following pages).

History

The Props Run Grade is the remains of a former railroad grade that was used for removing timber from this area at the turn-of-the 20th century. Forest visitors have used it as a multi-purpose trail for several years, but the Props Run Grade has not been part of the Monongahela National Forest (MNF) official trail system. When leaves are off the trees this grade provides scenic views of surrounding mountains and the valley below; it provides a "tunnel-like, cool, dark experience in the summer" when the leaves are on (Robles 1993 memo).

The upper section of the Props Run Grade (2.8 miles) receives very light recreational use, but the lower section (3.8 miles, which used to be accessible via a former skid trail that originates at another point on FR 24) receives frequent mountain bike use. Despite having numerous drainage problems, the lower section of Props Run Grade has been one of the most popular "unofficial" mountain bike routes in the East Gauley area for several years. Its popularity and use is expected to continue to increase over time

because of an aggressive marketing strategy that has been conducted by the State Division of Tourism, the Pocahontas County Tourism Commission, and local businesses such as Snowshoe Mountain Resort and Elk River Touring Center. The Props Run Grade has been used as a part of Snowshoe's Fat Tire Fest and Fall Foliage Races (which have been annual events for about ten years), and has received national and international exposure in several bicycling magazines and prominent newspapers.

MNF resource specialists recognized that improvements to the Props Run Grade were needed if it were to continue to be used so heavily as a trail. The Forest Hydrologist had expressed concerns that using the Props Run Grade as a trail was increasing the soil erosion that was already occurring on the grade and that the resulting sediment deposition into Props Run needed to be prevented. In his memo of May 17, 1993, Forest Recreation Specialist Joe Robles also recognized soil erosion and drainage problems on the grade; he identified possible work that could be accomplished to improve its condition.

Environmental Documentation

Conditions on the Props Run Grade have been discussed in three environmental analyses: primarily in the 1997 East Gauley Mountain Recreation Trails Assessment (Trails EA for a larger trail development plan for the east side of Gauley Mountain), but also to some extent in the 1996 East Gauley Mountain Timber Environmental Assessment (Timber EA) and the East Gauley Mountain Watershed Restoration Analysis.

Page 2-4 of the Trails EA recognized the need to make some "unofficial" bike routes in the Gauley Mountain area (including the Props Run Grade) part of the Monongahela Trail System. By recognizing them as system trails, the following could be accomplished—(1) disperse growing trail use; (2) improve rider safety and satisfaction; and (3) correct existing sediment impacts.

The specific objectives for Props Run projects were to meet the needs identified on page 3 of the Trails EA and move to the desired future condition (Trails EA, p. 7). The DFC is **primarily to provide a safe, well-identified, multi-purpose trail that can support increasing recreational use without causing sediment to be delivered to nearby Props Run** (a stream that supports native trout populations). Four improvements were to be made to the Props Run Grade —

1. Provide adequate signing.
2. Clear corridors.
3. Develop trailheads.
4. Establish proper drainage to correct unacceptable erosion impacts.

Alternative C was selected for implementation in the May 5, 1998, Trails Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact (Trails DN/FONSI). This decision authorized the following actions for the Props Run Grade (DN/FONSI, pp. 2-3 and EA, p. 11):

1. Recognize the 6.6-mile grade as a system trail from FR 24 to the Old Field Fork and improve it.
2. Construct a new trail from the Elk River Touring Center to private land near the base of the Props Run Trail to eliminate the need for users to cross the Old Field Fork of the Elk River.

Trail Closure and Reopening

The Props Run Trail has been closed to public use since the Fall of 1998. It was to be reopened in the Fall 2000 once all improvements were made; however, improvements took longer than expected. A sign has been posted at the head of the trail to inform recreation users that the trail may be reopened in 2001.

Resources Monitored & Observations

The following pages list the questions the interdisciplinary team (ID Team) sought to answer and summarizes the ID Team's observations:

1. What was the condition of the grade before improvements were made?

Before improvements were made, the Props Run Grade was about ten feet wide and had a zero to 7% gradient. The grade surface varied from bare rock and soil to grass covered (see video tape of this grade that is kept at the Marlinton RD office). The surface was dry and stable in a few areas, but most of the grade had drainage problems. Numerous intermittent and perennial streams crossed the grade, and in several places, these streams flowed down the grade for 1500-2000 feet before emptying into Props Run. This resulted in soil erosion, gullies on the grade, and sediment delivery to Props Run. See page 15 of the Trails EA for a description of the affected environment for aquatic resources.

Several areas existed on the grade where water collected to form soft, swampy sections within the grade. In some places, bike traffic had caused water to become channeled within the tread-way of the grade; this also caused erosion of the grade. Substantial amounts of sediment were being released into Big Run, Props Run, and Laurel Run.

In his 1993 memo, Robles recommended that the grade be maintained to the standard of a Level D road, retaining as many trees as possible, keeping it as narrow as possible, sloping the grade outward slightly, and creating ditches to channel water off of the grade. He also recommended cutting some trees along the grade to create some visual variety for recreation users and provide year-round views of the surrounding mountains and the valley below.

2. What improvements have been, or are yet to be made to the grade? How will the work be accomplished?

Because numerous improvements were to be made, work was completed in phases.

The **first phase** -- trail drainage improvements -- had been completed at the time of the ID Team's review in August 2000. The Corp. of Engineers completed this phase via a Memorandum of Agreement (see scope of work documentation in the project file). They had installed water bars along the entire section of the trail, shaped the grade of the trail, and seeded/mulched disturbed soils.

The **second phase**--construction of the bridge across Props Run--was still underway at the time the team conducted its review. A private contractor was in the process of building a bridge across Props Run that will facilitate multiple trail uses (e.g. hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, etc.) without adversely affecting the water quality or aquatic habitat of Props Run.

A **third** phase of trail improvement is expected to begin in the spring of 2001, but it is unknown when this phase will be completed. During phase III, the trail tread will be narrowed (by planting trees and placing rocks and logs within the grade), signs will be installed, and trailheads will be developed. The District doesn't anticipate being able to complete phase III in the near future unless volunteers are enlisted to help.

When all three phases are completed and vegetation has reestablished, the trail's tread is expected to be approximately one foot wide and seedlings and other vegetation will cover the rest of the grade.

Note: Construction of a connector trail between Elk River Touring Center property and the Props Run Trail will be accomplished as a separate project once administrative processes are completed.

3. Were the improvements to the Props Run Grade implemented as planned? If not, why not?

Except for creating fewer puncheons than anticipated (less than 11 puncheons were created, see p. 21 of the Trails EA), improvements to Props Run Trail were implemented as planned.

4. Were the needs that were described for the Props Run Trail improvements met?

Table A. Needs that were met as a result of improvements to the Props Run Trail.

Need for Improvements	Need Met?	Further Action Needed?
Disperse growing trail use.	Once the trail is reopened, it is expected to help disperse trail use.	Reopen the trail.
Improve rider safety.	Yes. Work completed to date has helped meet this need.	Assess rider safety after phases II and III are completed.
Improve rider satisfaction.	The trail is not open to public use yet so this cannot be determined yet.	Assess rider satisfaction after the trail has been opened to use.
Correct existing sediment impacts.	Yes.	Complete phases II and III.
Recognize the 6.6-mile grade as a system trail from FR 24 to the Old Field Fork.	No.	Once phases II and III are completed identify the Props Run Grade as a system trail from FR 24 to the Old Field Fork.
Improve the Props Run grade.	Yes. Work completed to date has helped meet this need.	Complete phase II and III.
Construct a new trail from the Elk River Touring Center to private land near the base of the Props Run Trail to eliminate the need for users to cross the Old Field Fork of the Elk River.	Some administrative processes must be completed before this can be implemented.	Complete necessary steps to allow construction of the new trail from Elk River Touring Center to the base of the Props Run Trail.
Provide a safe, well-identified, multi-purpose trail that can support increasing recreational use without causing sediment to be delivered to Props Run.	Yes. Work completed to date has helped meet this need.	Complete phases II and III.
Provide adequate signing.	This has not been implemented yet.	Install signs.
Clear corridors.	Yes, as was needed.	None.
Develop trailheads.	This has not been implemented yet.	Develop trailheads.
Establish proper drainage to correct unacceptable erosion impacts.	Yes. Work completed to date has helped meet this need.	Complete phases II and III.

5. Did the trail improvements (e.g. broad based dips, ditches, and out-sloping) made during phase I of the Props Run project result in the desired effects? If not, why?

Note: on August 2, 2000, the day before the team walked the Props Run Trail, the area had received heavy rainfall, therefore, the team's monitoring reflect effects during wet conditions.

The first phase of trail rehabilitation went well and resulted in the desired effects – **drainage improvements** have diverted water off the trail, stopped active soil erosion on the grade, and curtailed sediment delivery to Props Run.

The Corp. established approximately 120 broad-based dips within the entire length of the grade. Hay bales were used on the downhill side to trap sediment and prevent sediment from entering Props Run during project implementation. Crossings were armored, as needed, by hand lacing flat rocks in them. The Corp. sloped the grade in one direction and installed ditch lines down to the dips.

The improvements the Corp. made north of the Props Run crossing continue to have the desired effects. However, the improvements south of the Props Run crossing were damaged during phase II activities. Heavy equipment used during phase II activities traveled over the one-mile section from Beckwith property to the Props Run crossing; this equipment exposed the grades surface, created some ruts, and flattened some of the drainage dips. The team noted that this damage prevented some improvements from effectively diverting water from the trails surface; however, even after heavy rainfall, limited soil movement was evident in ditchlines. The team observed that sediment flowed over leaves in the ditchline only for the first 50 feet.

To ensure drainage improvements south of the Props Run crossing provide the desired effects over the long term, about one-mile of the trail needs to be repaired. Also, just south of the Props Run crossing, a dip created by the Corp is not adequately handling heavy rainfall and water is flowing 75-80 feet down the trail. Bedrock limits options for diverting this water, but the Forest engineer felt that the bridge contractor might be able to create another dip close to the existing dip to help solve the problem.

The team noted that the **berms and large boulders** that the Corp placed at the south end of the trail appear to be deterring motorized vehicle use as anticipated. The Assistant District Ranger for the Marlinton/White Sulphur Districts stated that these same materials were used at the north end of the trail and are preventing motorized vehicle use from the north end of the grade.

6. Are the improvements made to the grade likely to hold up under increased mountain bike use?

It is too soon to say whether the grade will hold up under increased mountain bike use because all phases of work have not been completed and the public has not begun to use it. The improvements north of the Props Run bridge site should hold up under increased trail use, including mountain bike and horseback riding use. However, the improvements made south of the bridge site are not likely to hold up to trail use without additional work. The drainage dips below Props Run need to be reestablished once the bridge building activities are complete. Also, the grade will need to be graded and reseeded once heavy equipment is no longer running over the grade.

7. Is phase II bridge construction having the expected effects? If not, why?

Hay bales that had been placed near the bridge abutment appeared to be effective at preventing sediment delivery to Props Run. However, the earthen material that was excavated to create the bridge footers was piled near the stream. In heavy rains, sediment from this pile could breach the sediment traps and flow into the stream. In future projects, excavation material could be covered during periods of inactivity and measures (e.g. silt fences) should be installed effectively to prevent sediment flow to streams.

8. Were public safety mitigations implemented during timber harvesting activities, and did they have the desired effect?

Page 7 of the Timber DN/FONSI, stated that the following public safety measures would be taken:

	Mitigation	Implemented As Planned? If not, why?	Had the Desired Effect?	Follow-up Needed?
1.	<p>Public safety will be a primary concern during helicopter operations. The following actions are meant to reduce or eliminate hazards to the public:</p> <p>The helicopter logging normal operating season will be restricted to the period October 15 through December 15 and March 15 through May 15, which will help reduce harvest activity during the peak recreation season.</p> <p>The operator will still be able to fell trees in the fall; only helicopter flights will be restricted to this season.</p>	<p>Yes, as it pertains to cutting units along the Props Run Grade.</p> <p>In the contract for the Humming Bird Timber Sale, clause AT17 defined the normal operating season as Oct 15 -Dec 15 and Mar 15 - May 15.</p> <p>Helicopter operations began along the Props Run Trail in October 23, 1998, and were completed by November 19, 1998.</p>	Yes.	None.

Table B. Specific mitigations identified to address public safety concerns.

	Mitigation	Implemented As Planned? If not, why?	Had the Desired Effect?	Follow-up Needed?
		<p>There is a letter to the file from District Ranger Schiffer, dated 12/9/97, allowing helicopter yarding after December 15th in other units with the stipulations that (1) the lower landing be used only until December 19th; and (2) the upper landing be used after that, weather permitting.</p> <p>The letter also documents the Ranger's conversation with Elk River Touring Center, and it addresses their concerns about helicopter operations after Dec. 15.</p>		
2.	The Props Run Trail will be closed to public use during active helicopter operations.	Yes. The trail was closed in 1998 and remained closed during timber sale operations, as well as during trail improvement work. The Trail is expected to be reopened in 2001.	Yes.	None.

9. Did Props Run Trail improvements result in the same effects to the recreational experience as anticipated on pages 24-25 of the Trails EA?

The anticipated versus actual effects to recreation resources are displayed in the following table:

Table C: Actual versus anticipated effects of Props Run Trail improvements.

Anticipated Effect	Actual Effect	Follow-up Needed?
Reduced recreation season for some trails as a result of East Gauley Mountain Timber sales.	Same.	None.
Use of the Props Run route would be temporarily disrupted while work is being completed to improve the trail. The Props Run grade would be closed during ground disturbing activity due to the large amount of watershed rehabilitation work needed on the grade.	Same.	None.
It would likely remain closed for one additional growing season to allow for revegetation of disturbed areas.	Project is not completed yet, so this cannot be determined.	Assess the need to close the trail for an additional year once phase II is completed.
The existing undeveloped character of the Props Run Trail would be modified by improvements.	Same.	None.
The addition of numerous drainage dips, channels, and a bridge would alter the riding experience for mountain bike users.	Same.	None.
Trail conditions would improve for riders who appreciate dry trail surfaces.	Same.	None.
Riders who enjoy the challenge of wet muddy trails may be disappointed.	Same.	None.
The closed forest canopy of the trail would be retained.	The canopy over the	None.

Table C: Actual versus anticipated effects of Props Run Trail improvements.

Anticipated Effect	Actual Effect	Follow-up Needed?
	trail remains fairly closed and most of the trail scenery is closed forest canopy. Timber harvesting has opened up the overstory and understory in four units along the trail. See previous comments for more details re: effect.	
Challenges such as small logs or rocks would be left along the trail.	Phase III work should result in this effect.	Complete phase III.
The trail will be easier to find.	This will occur when signs and trailheads have been completed.	Install trail signs and trailheads.
It will be safer to ride.	Same.	None.
It will be drier.	Same.	None.

10. When was timber harvesting initiated and completed along the Props Run Trail?

The following table provides the date that each of the four units was harvested and the period of helicopter logging (see inspection reports in the Humming Bird Timber Sale folder).

Table D: Dates four units along Props Run Trail were cut and timber was removed.

Unit #	Cutting Began	Cutting Ended	Helicopter Use Began	Helicopter Use Ended
9	10/06/98	11/04/98	11/04/98	11/19/98
10	10/12/98	11/04/98	10/23/98	11/04/98
18	10/12/98	10/21/98	10/23/98	10/28/98
19	10/12/98	10/21/98	10/23/98	10/28/98

*Note: Additional timber (scattered missed trees and damaged trees) were likely cut and flown shortly after these dates, but the majority of the harvest occurred over this time. Slash disposal in units 9 and 10 was not completed until 5/27/99 delaying the closing of these units.

11. Did timber harvesting along the Props Run Trail have the anticipated soil and sediment effects?

Before timber harvesting, grab and shovel samples in spawning gravels showed that Props Run had over 30% fine sediment levels—one of the highest sediment levels documented on the Forest (see sediment sample data in the project file). The March 1996 Timber EA identified concerns regarding timber harvesting in the Props Run drainage and designed harvesting to minimize potential impacts (Timber EA, p. 7). The Timber EA predicted that using helicopter logging would noticeably limit soil disturbance and prevent adverse sediment effects to Props Run (Timber EA, p. 69).

Although sediment sample data had not been analyzed yet, visual observations of Props Run were consistent with anticipated effects; timber-harvesting activities in this drainage did not appear to have adversely affected aquatic resources. As predicted, little ground disturbance resulted from timber harvesting along the Props Run grade because helicopters were used to remove trees from the cutting units. Together, timber cutting and helicopter activity lasted just over six weeks. Timber cutting began October 6, 1998, and was completed by November 4, 1998. Helicopter activity began October

23, 1998, and ended November 19, 1998. Sediment samples should be completed to understand quantitative changes in stream sediment over time.

12. Did timber harvesting cause visual impacts to the Props Run Trail?

During the East Gauley Mountain Timber Analysis of 1996, concerns were expressed that timber harvesting would adversely affect the visual quality along the Props Run Trail (Timber EA, p. 7 and Timber DN/FONSI, Appendix H-33 thru H-35). Although it could have been stated more clearly to address the issue, the EA implied that using helicopter logging to harvest units along the Props Run Trail would result in acceptable visual quality effects (Timber EA, p. 7 and pp. 116-117).

Four thinning units, one two-age unit, and one clear cut were harvested adjacent to the Props Run Trail (see Humming Bird Timber Sale folder for more information). In regards to short-term effects to visual quality, the Assistant District Ranger for the Marlinton/White Sulphur Ranger District stated that these units were raw looking right after they were harvested (this is typical and can be expected on future cuts). However, there were no short-term visual impacts to trail users because the trail was closed to public use during and immediately after timber harvesting to implement Phase I and II of the Props Run Trail improvements.

Pages 7 and H-34 of the 1996 Timber DN/FONSI had identified the following mitigation that could be implemented if necessary to address concerns about visual quality:

Table E: Mitigation from the 1996 Timber DN to address visual concerns along the Props Run Trail.

	Mitigation	Implemented As Planned? If not, why?	Had the Desired Effect?	Follow-up Action Needed?
1.	A landscape architect will participate in the lay out of all units adjacent to the Props Run railroad grade.	Yes. The Forest Landscape Architect was involved in the design of these units.	Yes.	None.
2.	If needed, adjustments will be made to ensure that visual quality is maintained along the grade. In some cases, this may include a buffer area; in others it may be modifying the proposed thin.	The ID Team did not determine whether adjustments were made, but the team did agree that the visual effects resulting from harvesting were acceptable.	NA.	None.
3.	These routes will be checked at the start of each recreation season (following timber harvest activities) to determine if visual quality goals are being met.	Yes. The Landscape Architect and ID Team helped accomplish this mitigation. The Landscape Architect confirmed via monitoring that these units did meet the expectations and visual management input to the project (Kerr e-mail). The thinning the ID Team observed did not result in long-term, adverse visual impacts (see more below).	Yes	None.
4.	Slash disposal zones will be required in harvest units located along Props Run Trail. Logging slash will be lopped and scattered to lie within three feet of the ground, for a distance of approximately 100 feet from the road or trail. This will vary when applied on the ground based on actual unit boundaries and sight distances from the trail.	The ID Team did not measure to see if slash lied within three feet of the ground, but they did determine that the cut units monitored did not detract from visual quality along the trail.	Yes.	None.

Page 24 of the 1997 Trails EA also outlined mitigation to prevent adverse visual effects:

Table F: Mitigation from 1997 Trails EA to prevent adverse visual effects along the Props Run Trail.

	Mitigation	Implemented As Planned? If not, why?	Had the Desired Effect?	Follow-up Action Needed?
1.	Retention of “no cut areas”, or leaving higher basal areas (more trees) in some cutting units located along these trails.	The ID Team did not measure the basal area or evaluate whether “no cut areas” were implemented; but the ID Team did determine that the units monitored didn’t detract from the visual quality provided along the trail.	Yes.	None.
2.	Restrictions that limit harvest activities to periods outside the normal recreation season.	See restriction in the timber sale contract regarding helicopter operations.	Yes.	None.
3.	Close trails during harvest activities.	Yes.	Yes.	None.
4.	Slash disposal requirements along the trails to reduce visual concerns.	The Team did not measure the height of slash but did feel that the desired visual effects had been obtained.	Yes.	None.

The ID Team observed one thinning unit along Props Run grade, which was located just north of where the trail crosses Props Run. The unit had been cut in 1998. The ID Team concurred with Kerr’s findings that helicopter logging and the additional mitigation identified in Appendix H of the Timber DN/FONSI had the desired effects.

Two years after harvesting, the thinning unit blended in well with the surrounding forest vegetation. This cutting created an opening that provided visual diversity along the trail without detracting from the trail’s setting. It was difficult to distinguish this cut unit from an opening created under natural conditions. The ID Team could not easily see stumps or paint. The slash was low. When the trail is opened for public use, it is doubtful if trail users will have visual concerns about these units.

The team also noted that boundaries or leave trees in this unit were marked so that the paint was not noticeable along the trail; this is something to remember to do when cutting along trails in other sales.

13. In the May 5, 1998 East Gauley Mountain Trail Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, the following additional mitigation were identified to be implemented:

Table G. Specific mitigations for Props Run Grade authorized by the 5/5/98 Trails DN/FONSI.

	Mitigation	Was it implemented as planned? If not, why?	Did it have the expected result? If not, why?	Follow-up Action Needed?
1.	Trails must be located on gentle grades across slopes, disturbed areas (such as cut and fill slopes and as much of the trail surfaces as possible) must be revegetated, and provisions must be made to divert surface water run-off (EA, p. 15).	Yes. During phase I, the entire trail was revegetated and improvements were made to divert surface water run-off from the trail’s tread. However, during phase II, the section below Props Run crossing was disturbed by equipment used to construct the bridge over Props Run. See information on previous pages.	So far, the mitigation implemented north of Props Run crossing has had the expected result. Those implemented south of the Props Run crossing has not because they were damaged during Phase II.	Verify that bridge construction is completed and that the trail south of the Props Run crossing is rehabilitated. Water bars, dips, grading, seeding, mulching, etc. will need to be completed.

Table G. Specific mitigations for Props Run Grade authorized by the 5/5/98 Trails DN/FONSI.

	Mitigation	Was it implemented as planned? If not, why?	Did it have the expected result? If not, why?	Follow-up Action Needed?
2.	Tree removal within the trail corridor will be limited to those trees that pose a safety hazard to trail users (EA, p. 25)(DN, p. 4).	Yes. Tree removal was minimal. Most trees that were removed or cut to narrow the width of the grade were already leaning across the trail.	Yes.	None.
3.	Hay bales or silt dams will be installed in stream channels to collect sediment during ground disturbing activities (EA, p. 25). All disturbed areas will be promptly reseeded (DN, p. 4).	This mitigation was not implemented consistently. All mitigation had been implemented before bridgework and was very effective. However, it was not consistently implemented during bridge construction in phase II. The bridge contract did not address potential effects to the trail. Hay bales were located near the bridge site, but not at stream crossings along road south of the bridge site.	Where this mitigation was implemented, it had the expected results.	At existing dip locations, install staked bales (sediment traps). Ensure that these are removed once disturbed soils revegetate. Grass seeding is expected to occur in the fall 2000. Ensure adequate grass is established before the end of the growing season to help prevent erosion and minimize sediment delivery to Props Run.
4.	The Forest Hydrologist or Aquatic Ecologist will be consulted for site-specific direction on design and placement of drainage structures and channel crossings. Wherever possible, trails will cross streams at a right angle (EA, p. 25)(DN, p. 4).	Both the Forest Hydrologist and Forest Fisheries Biologist were involved in the design phase, but were not involved in the specifics of implementation. The crossing at Props Run is at a right angle.	Yes, so far.	Have the Forest Hydrologist or Aquatic Ecologist review the condition of phase I improvements in Fiscal Year 2001 to-- (1) See whether improvements are having the anticipated effects; (2) Determine whether additional specialists involvement is needed.
5.	Trail crossings of drainage dips and channels will be protected with flat rocks or gravel. Drain outlets will also be protected with rock (EA, p. 25)(DN, p. 4).	The team did not walk far north of the Props Run bridge site, but what they did walk appeared to be adequate. It was hard to tell if this mitigation was implemented on the section below the Props Run bridge site because of the disturbance caused by equipment accessing the bridge site.	Unable to confirm at this point.	Reevaluate the drainage dips at the south end of the trail after bridge construction has been completed.
6.	Trail bridges will be used at large stream crossings, such as Props Run. These will be rustic structure, likely built with logs available on the site. Simple log structures (puncheon) will be used over	It is too soon to say. At the time of the ID Team's review, the trail bridge was in the process of being constructed across the largest stream – Props Run. The bridge design was changed after the DN was signed. When engineers began to design the trail, they realized that the area	Changes to the bridge design and use of culverts and dips are likely to result in the expected aquatic effects. However, it can't be determined yet whether the structure will blend in with the scenery as well as that which was originally	Insert this monitoring report in the project file to explain why changes were made to the bridge design. Revisit the bridge site once construction is completed to assess visual impacts and determine if objectives have been met

Table G. Specific mitigations for Props Run Grade authorized by the 5/5/98 Trails DN/FONSI.

	Mitigation	Was it implemented as planned? If not, why?	Did it have the expected result? If not, why?	Follow-up Action Needed?
	smaller stream crossings (EA, p. 26)(DN, p. 4).	trail, they realized that the span was greater than estimated and they chose a structure that would be sturdier. A few puncheons were constructed in phase III where drainage dips were not working well.	planned.	objectives have been met.
7.	Trail signs will be posted on trails, notifying users that trails shouldn't be ridden when the trail surface is wet (DN, p. 4).	This mitigation is not applicable yet because the trail currently is closed to trail use. This mitigation will be implemented once phase II is completed.	NA.	Ensure that trail signs "notifying users that trails shouldn't be ridden when the trail surface is wet" are posted before the trail is reopened to public use.
8.	Props Run Trail would remain closed to users for one growing season following reconstruction activities, to allow adequate time for vegetation to be established on disturbed areas (DN, p. 4).	Seeding occurred in 1999 after Phase I was completed. The entire trail was seeded and mulched. Straw was used instead of hay. Since then, Phase II has begun and disturbed areas south of the Props Run crossing. These sites need to be repaired after bridge construction is completed.	Yes.	Verify that the area south of the bridge was seeded after phase II. If the trail can be opened the same year that work is completed, put a note in the 1900 file to explain why another growing season is not needed.
9.	Trails on old railroad grades will be developed as narrow paths that meander within the grade clearing limits (EA, p. 26)(DN, p. 4). Bicycling experts will be consulted for advice in locating the trail tread on the most desirable path for cycling. Artificially placed obstacles (e.g. rocks/logs) will be used to direct riders to cross drainage dips and channel crossings at the intended location. In some cases, the trail will be routed onto the berms adjacent to the grade, to avoid swampy areas.	Although this work has been completed on some sections of the trail, some work is still to be done. A local expert did ride the grade.	Yes, in the areas that have been completed.	Implement phase III work on the remaining sections of the trail.
10.	The mitigation measure listed in the Biological Evaluation (4/2/97 and 12/15/97) concerning protection of potential Indiana bat roost trees will be followed (DN,	Yes. Some small trees were cut, but they were not potential roost trees for Indiana bats. See the updated standards or definition for potential roost trees.	Yes.	None.

Table G. Specific mitigations for Props Run Grade authorized by the 5/5/98 Trails DN/FONSI.

	Mitigation	Was it implemented as planned? If not, why?	Did it have the expected result? If not, why?	Follow-up Action Needed?
	p. 5). No hazard tree that is a potential roost tree will be removed unless it was examined for Indiana bats and no bats were discovered, or the tree is cut between 11/15 – 3/31.			
11.	Wherever possible, bulldozer work will be kept to a minimum (EA, p. 26) (DN, p. 4).	Yes. Considering the work that needed to be done, bulldozer user was minimal. No equipment was used on the mid section of the trail. It was done by hand.	Yes.	None.
12.	The Elk/Props Connector trail would be constructed contingent upon the follow (DN, p. 5): Elk River Touring Center must provide a public ROW across private property adjoining NFS land. ERTC must provide free public parking, with parking space for a minimum of two vehicles, with Forest Service approved signs. ERTC would construct or fund construction of the trail and cover any ROW costs. The trail must meet Forest Service specifications. The Forest Service must obtain written permission from Beckwith Lumber Company for public use of the adjoining private property along Laurel Run, near the base of the Props Run Trail.	The Elk/Props Connector Trail has not been constructed. The Forest Service is preparing a right-of-way agreement for this project to establish a public ROW across private property. ERTC has not yet provided public parking or funded or constructed an Elk/Props Connector Trail. In regards to Beckwith property, the Forest has found a better route on higher ground to avoid using Beckwith property. NEPA has not been done yet, but heritage resource inventory and a biological assessment of the new proposed location has been done.	NA	Check with the Forest Lands Staff Officer and ELTC to determine the status of gaining ROW access across ERTC property and public parking facilities. Complete a letter for the file to explain why access across Beckwith property is no longer being pursued and the new location being considered. Complete NEPA for the new route. Ensure BE is up-to-date before implementing connector.
13.	Historic sites will be protected from potential disturbance due to trail development activity, by avoiding the sites as directed by the forest Archeologist (EA, p. 26) (DN, p. 5).	The ID Team did not walk the entire length of the trail to assess whether this mitigation was implemented.	Not verified.	Review the historic sites to determine if this mitigation was implemented as planned.

Table G. Specific mitigations for Props Run Grade authorized by the 5/5/98 Trails DN/FONSI.

	Mitigation	Was it implemented as planned? If not, why?	Did it have the expected result? If not, why?	Follow-up Action Needed?
14.	Trail information and maps will be posted at trailheads, and trails will be signed with reassurance markers (EA, p. 26)(DN, p. 5).	The ID Team witnessed the trail information and map posted at the lower end of the trail. Reassurance markers will be installed after phase II of the trail work has been completed.	Yes.	After phase II is completed, ensure reassurance markers are installed.

14. Was the actual cost of improving the Props Run Trail consistent with the anticipated cost? If not, why?

The Trails EA estimated that rehabilitation Props Run Trail would cost \$40,967 (p. 14). The actual cost was \$170,033 more than anticipated:

Phase	Type of Improvement	Actual Cost	Funds Used
Phase I	Drainage improvements	\$149,000	Knutson-Vandenberg & soil improvement funds
Phase II	Bridge construction	\$ 42,000	10% funds
Phase III	Narrow the trail tread and provide "challenges"	\$ 20,000	
Total		\$211,000	

The actual cost of all improvements was 515% more than anticipated. This extreme difference in cost is a result of several factors:

- a. The cost estimate provided in the EA was a rough estimate that did not take into consideration the detail to which the work would be accomplished.
- b. The estimate was based on the assumption that work would be completed via force account, but both phase I and II were contracted out.
- c. The cost estimate in the EA also was based on the assumption that a much smaller bridge would be needed to cross Props Run. When engineers went out to the crossing to determine the design specifications, they determined that a much larger, more durable structure would be needed to allow trail use without adverse impacts to aquatic resources.

15. Do Forest Plan standards need to be revised, deleted, or created to address particular issues?

The following pages describe existing standards/guidelines that are applicable to the Props Run Trail improvements and identify whether revisions or deletions may be desirable. In regards to standards/guidelines that could be created:

- Currently, all trails on the Forest are open to multiple uses -- even though they may not be designed to sustain the horseback and mountain bike use they receive. Address the kinds of impacts that mountain bike and horseback riding use can have on resources by:
 1. Designating specific trails for mountain bike and horse use; or
 2. Identify standards/guidelines that regulate such uses on multiple use trails; or
 3. Create standards/guidelines that could be used to help determine which trails are appropriate for specific uses.

16. What Forest-wide standards and guidelines were applicable to this project? Were they followed? If not, why? Are changes or additions needed to these standards/guidelines? If so, document rationale for changes or additions.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 49/1560	B. Cooperate with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.	1. Before initiating any land management activity, which might affect cultural resources, the Forest Service will consult with the SHPO and the ACHP as necessary to evaluate the significance of cultural resources and to determine the effect of proposed actions on significant properties.	Yes. The State Historic Preservation Office was involved in the planning process. Their concurrence letter is dated 08/09/93.	No.	None.
p. 50/1560	E. Cooperate in wildlife and fish resource management.	1. Wildlife and fish resource management activities will be coordinated with the State Department of Natural Resources and the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior...	Yes. The WVDNR was involved in the planning for this project. Their response to scoping is dated 6/3/96.	No.	None.
p. 54/1800	C. Promote the use of volunteers, including technical and professional people, in keeping with the Volunteer Act of 1972, for campground hosts, college interns, trail and road construction and maintenance, etc. Maintain a high interest and desire to cooperate with individuals and groups to promote a regular, recurring program. Provide	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project work should be designed to provide a sense of accomplishment to the participant. 2. Safe work habits will be demonstrated and encouraged. 3. Participants should be helped to develop an awareness of National Forest management in relationship to natural resources and a quality environment. 	<p>Yes.</p> <p>A volunteer provided information regarding trail design. Volunteers are likely to help implement trail tread improvements in the future.</p>	No.	None.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
	suitable recognition to participants.				
p. 54/1900	A. Favor native species when restoring disturbed areas or providing vegetative screening.		Not all of the species used to seed disturbed areas were native. See the project file for the seed mixture that was used for this project.	No.	Work with the Forest Botanist to develop a seed mixture that adequately protects disturbed areas and favors native species.
p. 56/1950	A. A decision to implement any action that could affect resources, land uses, and environmental quality shall be proceeded by an Environmental Analysis...	<p>3. Projects...will receive Environmental Analysis consideration appropriate to their magnitude and complexity.</p> <hr/> <p>5. Economic analysis, as appropriate, will be a normal part of the Environmental Analysis procedure.</p> <hr/> <p>6. Public involvement, as appropriate, will be a normal part of the Environmental Analysis procedure.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>See page 2 of this report. An EA and DN/FONSI were completed for Props Run Trail work. Page 8 of the EA and page 3-4 of the DN described the scoping that was conducted with the public and the issues and alternatives considered in the analysis.</p> <p>Page 14 of the Trails EA estimated the costs of proposed trail projects.</p> <p>See the Trails EA and the Timber EA for ways in which the public was involved in the NEPA process.</p>	No.	None.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 63-64/2310	A. Emphasize semi-primitive forms of recreation requiring a large land base, such as viewing scenery, hiking, backpacking, canoeing, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, or nature study.	NA.	Yes, (see DN, p. 5-6 and EA, p. 2-3).	No.	None.
	C. In all case, recreation opportunities shall be managed to protect natural resource values and promote user safety.	NA	Yes. See mitigation.	No.	None.
	D. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) will be the basis for road and facility planning and management.	NA	Yes. Props Run projects are consistent with the ROS for this area.	No.	None.
p. 68-69/2350	D. A system of trails will be constructed and maintained for dispersed recreation opportunities.	1. Maintenance and/or relocation of existing trails will take priority over construction of new trails. Trail maintenance priorities are as follows: a) Reduction of hazards to trail users. b) Prevention of resource damage. c) Trail marking and signing. d) Tread way clearing work not directly related to a) or b) above, but necessary for user enjoyment. In this category, priority shall go first to national or cross-Forest trails and then to other trails. f) Trail management will be compatible with established ROS objectives.	Yes. See EA, pp.3-8 and DN, pp. 1-2, 4-6.	No.	None.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
		2. Trail will be protected from being blocked or obliterated by resource management projects. a) If a trail is used as a road, the trail shall be relocated for the length of the project.	Yes. The trail was closed during timber and trail activities as a safety precaution; but it was not used as a road, blocked, or obliterated.	No.	None.
		3. Priorities for trail development shall be as follows: a) Seneca Rocks – West Side Trail b) Trails needed to implement management prescription 6.2. c) Shorter day use trails intended for hiking, multiple trails uses, or to supplement other recreation sites. d) Upgrading of existing hiker trails in appropriate Management Prescriptions.	Yes. The East Gauley Mountain Recreation Trails EA explained the need for improving the Props Run Grade and making it part of the Forest Trail System. See previous discussions about needs.	No.	None.
		5. Formal cooperative agreements may be established with trail or other clubs that are interested in planning, constructing, maintaining, or managing trails on the Forest. Any trails authorized under such agreements must contribute to the accomplishment of Forest Plan objectives. 6. Special purpose trails such as equestrian, ski touring, motorbike, snowmobile, four-wheel drive, etc., may be authorized for construction and maintenance by a user group, if compatible with the Forest road and trail policy, management prescription, and ROS class. Requests for such trails should be processed through the appropriate Ranger.	Yes. As previously mentioned, the Props Run Trail improvements were identified because of local government and business interests. Past and future improvements and maintenance of the Props Run Trail has, and will likely be implemented, in part, by volunteers such as those from the Elk River Touring Center.	No.	None.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 70/2360	B. Protect historic, archaeologic, and cultural resources from preventable damage...	2. Conduct cultural resource surveys and needed evaluations in all areas to be affected by... earth disturbing activities and design action to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.	Cultural resource surveys were completed and mitigation was identified to protect known sites.	No.	Monitor the heritage resources sites to ensure they were protected.
		3. Known sites will be protected from preventable damage, as much as practical.	The team did not check these sites during the August 2000 visit.		
p. 71/2380	A. Attain the highest possible visual quality in resource management activities and Plans, commensurate with other appropriate uses and benefits.	1. The visual management system will be used to identify rehabilitation and enhancement projects on the Forest. Areas so identified will be rehabilitated to meet the adopted visual quality objective. Native vegetation will be favored in all rehabilitation and enhancement projects.	Yes.	No.	None.
		3. Favor the use of naturally occurring colors in the choice of finishes for constructed facilities. Avoid the use of green, except when painting buildings in urban settings.	See response to materials use for bridge construction.	No.	None.
		7. Design and construct road structures such as bridges, binwalls, headwalls, etc., to meet the adopted Visual Quality Objective and to be compatible with the characteristic landscape.	See response regarding the materials used for bridge construction. This standard was met to the extent possible given the location and width of the Props Run stream crossing.	Optional.	Language could be added to this standard to allow flexibility when topography or other ground conditions make it infeasible.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 79-80/2500	A. Protect water and soil resources...Minimize non-point pollution to the maximum extent, technically and economically feasible...	1. Disturbed soils must be protected by fertilizing, liming, seeding, and/or mulching as soon as possible after project completion or as specified in contracts...	More could have been done to protect soil resources during bridge construction activities.	No.	If a project is delayed, ensure disturbed soils are covered or seeded promptly and not left exposed, especially when within a stream's filterstrip.
		5. Erosion prevention and control measures will be considered in all...project plans which may reduce soil productivity or cause erosion.	Yes, erosion prevention and control measures were discussed within the Trails EA.	No.	None.
p. 82a/2500	J. District Rangers will insure that special management practices are applied in filter-strips during the Oct. 1 to June 1 in Trout streams as applicable.	<p>2. Any filterstrip disturbing activity exceeding two consecutive days from Oct. 1 to June 1 in designated fish management areas will be implemented only after consultation with a fisheries biologist.</p> <p>4. All road construction or other filter-strip disturbing activities during Oct. 1 to June 1 will employ special erosion control measures concurrent with the activity.</p> <p>a) Seed and mulch all disturbed areas that are not part of the active work site concurrent with the activity.</p> <p>b) Revegetate disturbed areas as often as needed to establish erosion control vegetation.</p> <p>c) Use 1 ½ inches of mulch or employ special mulch substitutes in critical areas; e.g. fabric mulch.</p> <p>d) At construction sites, use filter fabric fence around disturbed area perimeter to help trap eroded soil particles.</p>	<p>Yes, these standards were implemented, but some were enforced more than others.</p> <p>The contract began in May 2000 and officially closed in November 2000. Most soil disturbing activities occurred between June and October.</p> <p>See previous discussion about seeding and the use of hay bales.</p>	No.	Ensure that everyone involved in designing and implementing future projects reviews these standards. Make sure that necessary action is taken to address these standards.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
		e) All trout streams will be identified on all contracts, and any special scheduling requirements will be discussed with prospective bidders during the pre bid meetings.			
p. 83/2620	A. Fish and wildlife habitat will be managed to maintain viable populations of all existing native vertebrate species and to maintain or improve habitat of management indicator species.	1. Indicator species used for monitoring wildlife populations are: Indiana bat, Big-eared Bat, Cheat Mountain Salamander, Wild Trout, Black Bear, Turkey, Varying Hare, Gray Squirrel, White-tailed Deer, Northern Flying Squirrel.	Yes, see the Trails EA for a discussion of how habitat would be affected by trail improvements.	No.	None.
p. 84/2670	A. Management will protect or enhance habitat for threatened and endangered species and consider the needs of species identified as special or unique.	1. Management of habitat critical to endangered and threatened wildlife and fish species is considered the first priority management activity...	Yes, the 4/2/97 BE for the Trails EA determined that improving the Props Run Trail was not likely to adversely effect any endangered or threatened species (p. 18). The 12/15/97 addendum strengthened this determination re: Indiana bats.	No.	None.
		3. Sensitive, unique, or special plants or animals will be considered in the design of projects...	Yes, the 4/2/97 BE stated that improving the trail would not result in the loss of population viability over the Forest for any of the sensitive species or cause a trend towards federal listing.	No.	None.

Table I: Assessment of Forest-wide Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	Forest-wide Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 87/2670	B. Sensitive wildlife species will be afforded the highest possible protection commensurate with other appropriate uses and benefits.	1. A survey for sensitive species will be done during and as part of normal project reconnaissance and design.	Yes, the 4/2/97 BE stated that improving the trail would not result in the loss of population viability over the Forest for any of the sensitive species or cause a trend towards federal listing.	No.	None.
		2. If sensitive species are found, mitigation measures will be made part of the project design.	Yes, the 4/2/97 BE addressed potential effects to sensitive species. No mitigation was necessary.	No.	None.
p. 87/2670	C. Riparian Management will protect and enhance habitat for wildlife species and consider the needs for species identified as Threatened, Endangered, Special, or Unique.	1. Endangered bat foraging habitat includes riparian land and vegetation approximately 100 feet wide along both sides of streams, which are at least 30 feet wide as of June 15. Included are aquatic ecosystems, floodplains, riparian ecosystems, and wetlands... a)Protect all standing dead trees... b)Protect living loose bark trees such as hickories, elms, oaks, and sycamores. c)Protect hollow trees and den trees whether living or dead.	Yes, the 4/2/97 BE and the 12/15/97 addendum addressed potential effects to Indiana bats. The ID Team did not monitor this item.	No.	None.

17. Does this project help meet the Management Prescription (MP) 6.1 objectives?

Yes. MP 6.1 areas are to provide remote habitat for wildlife species intolerant of disturbance; a semi-primitive and nonmotorized type of recreational environment will be featured; a mix of forest products; etc. A variety of projects have been implemented in the Props Run drainage in recent years to help meet MP 6.1 objectives. For example, timber harvesting via the Humming Bird Timber Sale helped provide habitat for wildlife and a mix of forest products. The Props Run Trail improvements have helped improve this area's semi-primitive and nonmotorized recreation experience.

18. Which MP 6.1 standards and guidelines were applicable to this project? Were they followed? If not, why? Are changes or additions needed to these standards/guidelines? If so, document rationale for changes or additions.

The following standards/guidelines are applicable to Props Run Trail improvements.

Table J: Assessment of MP 6.1 Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	MP <u>6.1</u> Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 169/2310	A. Location of recreational developments will be determined with priority given to correcting health and safety problems, protecting the environment, complementing prescribed recreation opportunities, and meeting public demand.	NA	Yes, see DN, p. 5-6 and EA, p. 2-3.	No.	None.
	B. Feature semiprimitive nonmotorized ROS class recreation opportunities.	NA.	Yes, see EA, pp. 17-19 and 24-25.	No.	None.
p. 170/2360	A. Trail management will be compatible with the ROS objective of the area. Three wheeled vehicles, trail bikes, and snowmobiles will be prohibited from trails in remote habitat areas unless specifically authorized on a case-by-case basis. Emergency and administrative use of these vehicles in remote areas is	1. Trail density will be from zero to one mile per square mile.	Page 17-19 discussed how trail improvements would affect trail density. Page 6 of the DN states that trail density in the Props Run OA exceeds this guideline (1.25 mi/sqmi versus 1.0 mi/sqmi) and why it is permissible. Exceeding the density will have little impact on the remote wildlife habitat objectives or semi-primitive	Optional.	The ID Team feels that this guideline is flexible, recognizing that exceeding this standard can be consistent with MP 6.1 direction. To make it clear that this is flexible, the guideline could be changed to read – “Trail density will <u>generally</u> be from zero to one mile per square mile <u>but may be exceeded if a site specific evaluation determines that exceeding this guideline is warranted.</u>

Table J: Assessment of MP 6.1 Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	MP <u>6.1</u> Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
	permissible when approved by the Forest Officer in charge.		recreation experiences associated with the trail density guidelines.		
		2. The intent of this Management Prescription is to provide non-motorized recreation opportunities. Facilities will be open for foot travel. Travel ways will normally be closed to public vehicle use. Selected areas, trails, or roads may be open, where appropriate, to motorized vehicles during specific periods for specific purposes such as firewood access, hunter distribution, and emergencies or administrative use. These travel ways will not be open to public vehicles during the period April 15 to August 15.	Yes.	No.	None.
p. 171/2380	A. Management activities will be designed to blend with the natural character of the landscape.	2. Use of native materials will be emphasized to build and maintain trails and recreation facilities. Milled logs and planks can be used. Metal, glass, and plastic should not appear to be major parts of any structure. Culvert pipe entrances should be concealed with rock or soil.	Most improvements emphasized the use of native materials. However, it is too soon to say if the bridge being built across Props Run will blend as well as expected.	No. This guideline is flexible; it indicates preference for native material but does not require them.	None.
p. 176/2620	A. Wild turkey and/or black bear and associated species will be featured on lands assigned to this Management Prescription.	NA.	Yes, see Trails EA, p. 22-23.	No.	None.
p. 179	A. Cold water streams suitable for trout will be managed to protect and enhance that habitat.	3. Fish passage in streams should not be blocked or prevented, unless done in conjunction with prescribed fish management.	Yes, none of the improvement will block fish passage.	No.	None.
		6. Projects will rehabilitate both human and natural sources of erosion and sedimentation.	Yes, see EA, p. 22.	No.	None.

Table J: Assessment of MP 6.1 Standards/Guidelines Compliance.

Forest Plan Page #/FSM Reference	General Direction	MP <u>6.1</u> Standard/Guideline	Was It Implemented?	Need for Change in Standard?	Recommendation for Management
p. 179a/2670	A. Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species will be managed to ensure their protection.	1. Standards and guidelines for T & E species are found in the Forest-wide standards and guidelines.	Yes, see the 4/2/97 BE and 12/15/97 addendum.	No.	None.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Team makes the following **general recommendations** to consider for **similar types of trail improvement projects**:

- In the future, schedule the implementation of projects so that one phase of a project does not damage the improvements made during a previous phase (e.g. some drainage improvements completed in the first phase of the Props Run Trail improvement project were damaged by equipment that was used in the second phase). Such scheduling will save time and money and minimize the potential for unwanted effects to natural resources.
- In future projects, excavation material should be seeded or sediment control measures (e.g. properly installing silt fence, covering material with a tarp or fabric mat, etc.) specified in the contract and enforced to prevent adverse sediment effects to streams.
- When addressing public concerns in NEPA documents, clearly state how proposed activities will affect natural resources. For example, the Props Run Timber EA implied, instead of stating clearly, that helicopter logging would result in acceptable visual quality effects.
- When cutting trees along trails (or roads open to public use) in future sales, mark the cutting unit boundaries so that the paint is not easily visible from the visually sensitive area. This was done for the cutting units along Props Run Grade and prevented adverse visual effects.
- Have ID Team members and those who implement projects review the guidelines regarding use of special management practices in trout streams during Oct. 1 to June 1. Ensure that action is taken prior to implementation to address them.
- Work with the Forest Botanist to develop a seed mixture that favors native species as much as possible but also will provide adequate protection to disturbed areas.
- If a project is temporarily delayed, ensure disturbed soils are not left exposed (e.g. seeded promptly or somehow covered to prevent soil movement), especially when within a stream's filterstrip.
- See the previous recommendations regarding potential changes to the *Forest Plan*. For example, consider creating standards/guidelines for horseback and mountain bike use; think about rewording the existing *Forest Plan* guideline regarding trail density to make it clear that trail densities can be greater than 1 mi/sqmi if site-specific conditions deem it appropriate.

The following table summarizes the **specific items** that the ID Team feels should be followed-up on **in regard to Props Run improvements**:

Table K: Specific items the ID Team recommends be followed-up on in regards Props Run projects.

	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Date Accomplished</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Comments?</u>
1.	Assess rider safety after phase II and III are completed.			
2.	Assess rider satisfaction after the trail has been opened to use.			
3.	Correct existing sediment impacts by completing phase II.			
4.	Identify the Props Run Grade as a system trail from FR 24 to Old Field Fork after phase II and III are completed.			
5.	Facilitate the building of the connector trail from ERTC to Props Run Trail.			
6.	Provide a safe, well-identified, multi-purpose trail that can support increasing recreational use without causing sediment to be delivered to nearby Props Run by completing phase II and III.			
7.	Install signs before the trail is reopened to public use to make the trail easier to find and inform users that it "shouldn't be ridden when the trail surface is wet."			
8.	Develop trailheads.			
9.	Try to prevent the 75-80 foot flow of water that is occurring just south of the Props Run crossing. Consider having the bridge contractor address.			
10.	Widen, deepen, and rock the two small dips north of the Props Run Bridge site to ensure they will function properly for several years.			
11.	When bridge construction is completed and heavy equipment is not using the south end of the trail, (1) grade, or otherwise reshape the trail's tread, (2) reestablish adequate drainage dips, and (3) reseed, mulch, etc. as needed.			
12.	Once phase II is complete, place boulders at south entrance to prevent vehicle use.			
13.	After phase II, assess whether the trail needs to remain closed for another year. If the trail can be opened the same year that work is completed, write a note to the file to explain why a growing season following reconstruction isn't needed.			
14.	Complete phase III to provide challenges in the trail (e.g. logs and rocks).			
15.	To verify the actual effects of activities implemented along the Props Run Grade, summarize and interpret the sediment data that were collected from			

Table K: Specific items the ID Team recommends be followed-up on in regards Props Run projects.

	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Date Accomplished</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Comments?</u>
	Props Run. If needed, identify any changes that should be made for future projects to improve project design or methods of collecting data.			
16.	Have the Forest Hydrologist or Aquatic Ecologist review the condition of phase I improvements to--(1) see whether they are having the anticipated effects and (2) determine whether additional specialists involvement is needed.			
17.	While the bridge construction is being completed, install staked bales (sediment traps) at existing dip locations south of the Props Run crossing.			
18.	Have sediment control devices removed once disturbed soils revegetate.			
19.	Monitor grass seeding after phase II to ensure grass coverage is adequate to prevent erosion and minimize sediment delivery to Props Run. The team was concerned that seed might not be established by the end of the growing season.			
20.	Once phase II has been completed, ensure drainage dips south of the Props Run crossing have been protected with flat rocks or gravel as needed.			
21.	Insert this monitoring report in the project file to explain why changes were made to the bridge design after the decision notice was signed.			
22.	After phase II, assess visual impacts and determine if objectives have been met.			
23.	Check with the Forest Lands Staff Officer and ERTC to determine the status of gaining ROW access across ERTC property and public parking facilities.			
24.	Complete a letter for the file to explain why access across Beckwith property is not being pursued and a new location is being considered. Assess impacts.			
25.	Review historic sites to verify that heritage resource sites were protected.			
26.	Consider videotaping the trail to compare pre- and post-trail conditions.			

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