



Missouri Wilderness Coalition

Lower Rock Creek Alert

February 2008



Mark Twain Forest Plan Fails To Protect Wilderness!

During a visit this past weekend (February 2-3) to Lower Rock Creek, one of our proposed wilderness areas, an atrocity was observed which demands immediate attention. Illegal ATV abuse there has apparently gotten much worse (*see photo at right and bottom of letter*).

ATVs were heard in the heart of the proposed wilderness throughout Saturday and virtually every hiking trail in

the eastern and central portion of the area had been despoiled by the ATVs riding in the recent snow. Also, all of the previously posted "Foot Traffic Only" signs in the north, east, and central portion of the Lower Rock Creek area appear to have been removed. Cut saplings and even many larger trees were along the sides of trails (*see photo of cut trees below*), having recently been cleared to widen the paths. According to the report, the Doe Gap area of Lower Rock has been especially hard hit.

We all have seen such abuse before. The sober news from Lower Rock is that aggressive riding of ATVs in the wilderness persists and is threatening to become more pervasive, despite the provisions of the new Mark Twain Management Plan, which supposedly restricts ATV use. Obviously, the provisions of the Forest Plan are not adequate to protect these areas without the safeguards of wilderness designation. Past reports to the Forest Service of such activity at Lower Rock Creek have not resulted in effective action. Nevertheless, we must write to Paul Strong, Acting Supervisor, Mark Twain National Forest to report this incident and demand that the damage be stopped. Such activity threatens permanent damage to the wilderness



This recent illegal ATV outrage is an alarm bell. It signals our need to work harder than ever for wilderness designation for Lower Rock Creek and for all of our areas...now!! We must seek the real and enduring protection that can only be provided by the provisions of the Wilderness Act.



It is important for everyone to communicate this news and the threat to our wilderness to the Missouri Congressional delegation. Even if you have already written we ask that you do so once again.

Our delegation now has a very compelling reason to take positive action for wilderness. Lets all get to work and urge them to do just that.

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Photos of the February Damage

- 1) The photo at the top of the letter was taken just west of the Doe Gap area.
- 2) The second photo shows young cedar trees that have been cut along one of the trails.
- 3) The photo at the right was taken in the Doe Gap area.