



Missouri Wilderness Coalition

Smith Creek Alert

May 2008

Smith Creek Wilderness Threatened By New Forest Service Proposal Citizen Response Imperative - Deadline May 16th

Situated in the midst of mid-Missouri's population centers of Columbia, Fulton, and Jefferson City, the Cedar Creek District of the Mark Twain National Forest is much-used and much-beloved. And no portion of the Cedar Creek District is more special or better loved than the beautiful and still surprisingly remote Smith Creek Wilderness above and below the old Rutherford Bridge connecting Boone and Callaway Counties. For more than 25 years conservationists have worked with the Forest Service to respect and protect the authentic wilderness character of Smith Creek's streams, bluffs, pinnacles, forests, wildlife, and solitude. In 2007 Smith Creek (2,195 acres) was included in a statewide proposal along with six other Missouri areas for designation as a federal Wilderness Area.



Smith Creek Proposed Wilderness

All of this good conservation progress, however, has been placed at grave and needless risk by the very recent revelation that new Forest Service plans would utterly destroy the fragile remnants of remoteness and wilderness that make Smith Creek so rare.

Those plans are incorporated in a "Scoping Report" referred to as the "Southwest Project," (project number 21888). This document has had only limited distribution so far, and must be exposed to full public scrutiny.

The "Southwest Project" addresses a wide range of proposed management activities across nearly 6000 acres of the Cedar Creek District. Most of the project calls for a variety of forest management and development that many would consider excessive, but our immediate focus must be the specific projects proposed for the northwestern portion of the de-facto Smith Creek wilderness, an area referred to as the "Epple Tract".

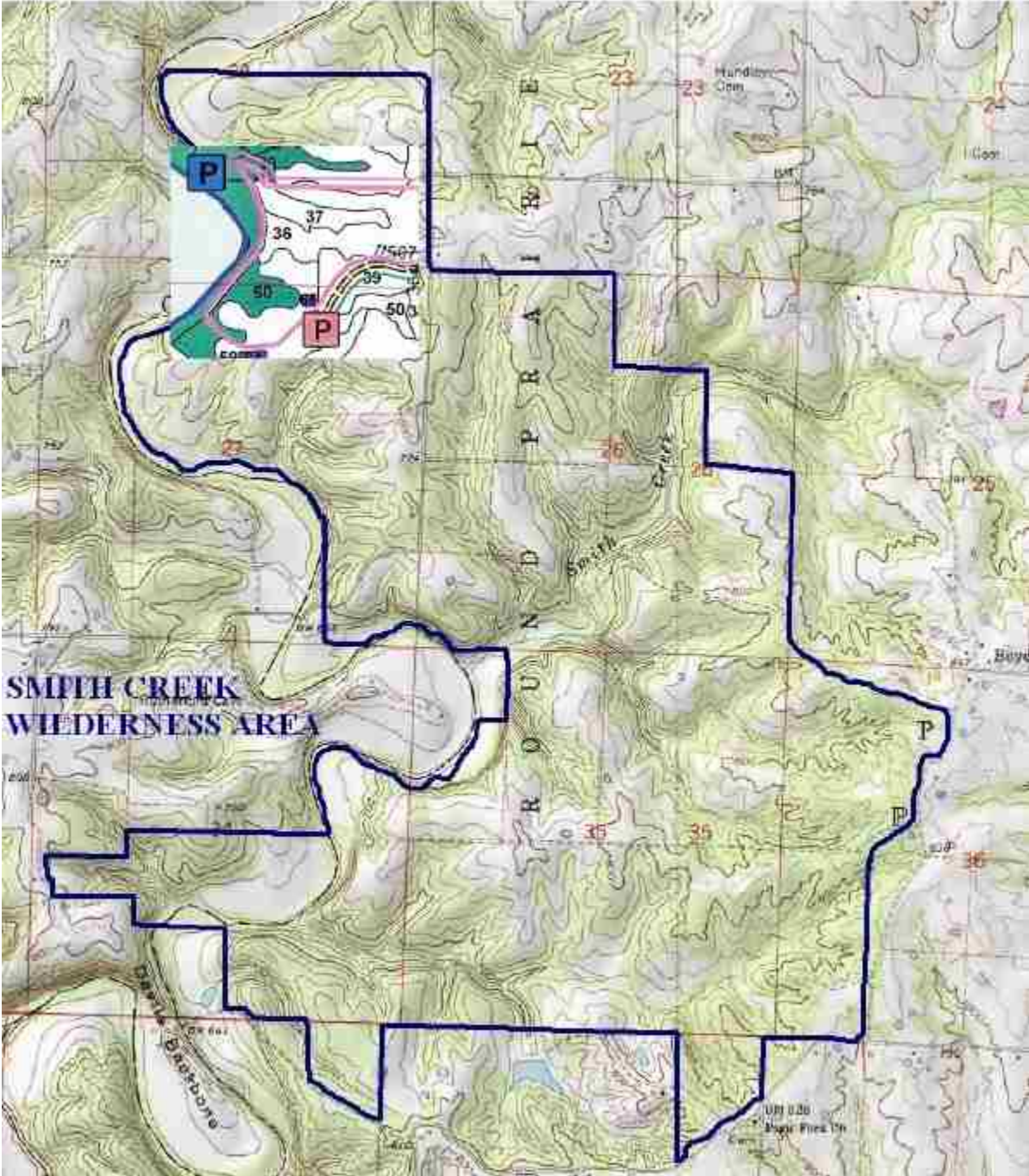


View of the Epple Tract, where logging and development are proposed

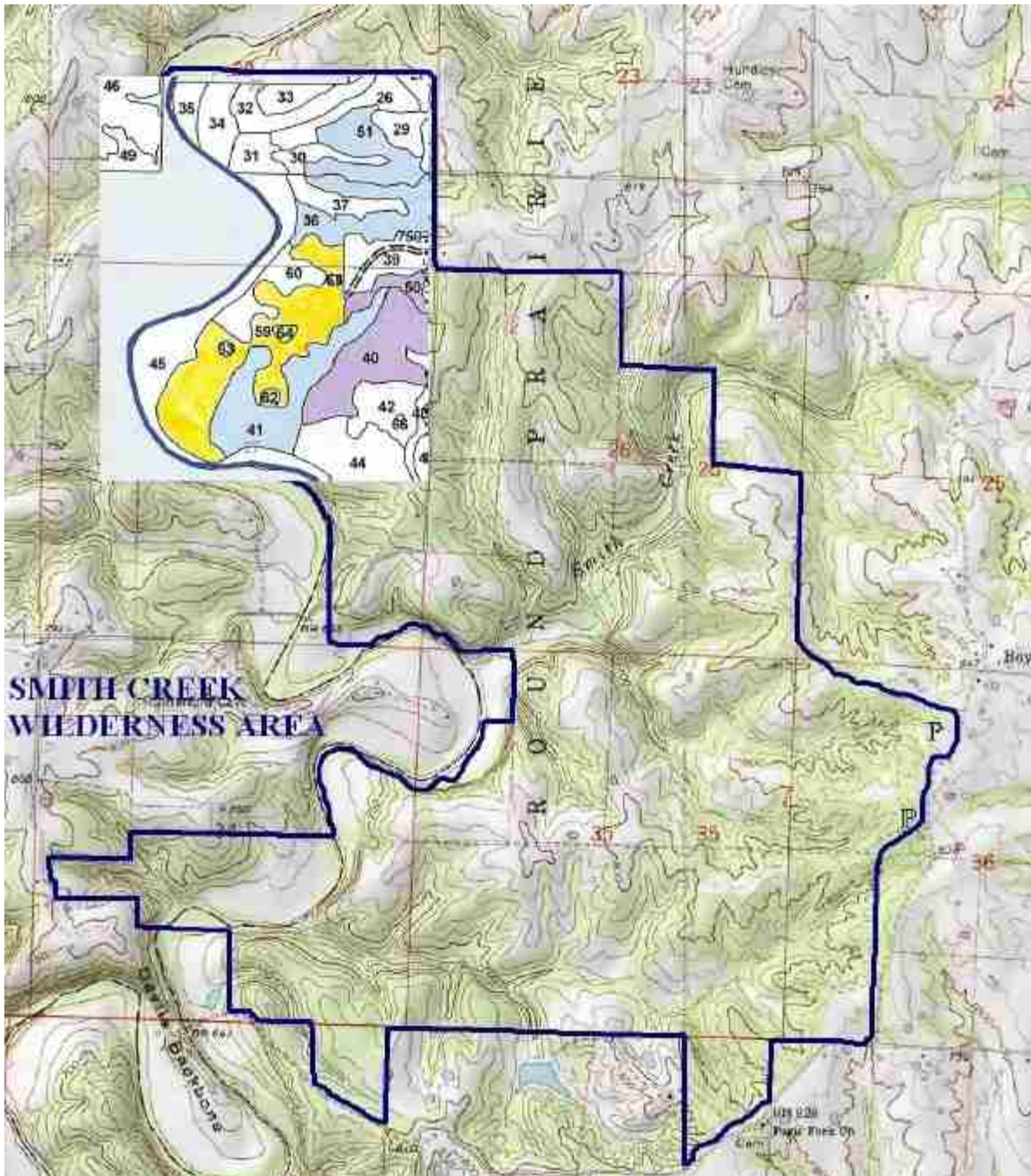
For starters, the Forest Service does not even include the Epple Tract as part of the Smith Creek Roadless Area, which has been recognized by 27 Missouri conservation organizations. The plan divides the Epple Tract (part of "Compartment 11") from the rest of Smith Creek, and then proceeds to propose:

- various forms of logging, including "shelterwood" cuts;
- construction or re-construction of two roads;
- construction of two new parking areas; and
- adding new grazing allotments with maintained fences and other support structures.

Smith Creek Wilderness showing the approximate overlay location of Forest Service-planned development and management activities.



Map1: Two developed parking lots labeled **P** and road building and road re-construction shown here in pink line, all within the wilderness.



Map 2: Planned shelterwood seedtree cuts (shown here in blue), uneven aged forest management cuts (shown here in purple) and new grazing/maintenance of openland habitat (shown here in yellow).

These projects constitute an intensive level of development, and would needlessly destroy the remote naturalness of this area. These proposals do not make environmental or economic sense, and the most unique resources of Smith Creek would be sacrificed. They must be stopped.

The public does have the opportunity to comment on this project, but in order to be considered during this "scoping phase" we will have to work very quickly.

Comments must be submitted by May 16.

Please contact the Forest Service today. If you can do more please spread the word to others to also write to the Forest Service. Comments must be sent to:

Elrand D. Denson
Houston/Rolla/Cedar Creek Ranger District
108 South Sam Houston Blvd.
Houston, MO 65483

-OR-

You may also respond electronically to the following e-mail address, comments-eastern-mark-twain-rolla@fs.fed.us (subject line: Southwest Project #21888).

Make it clear that the portions of their "Southwest Project" proposal that relate to Smith Creek (the "Epple tract") are completely unacceptable because they violate the integrity of the area's most important resources, wilderness and primitive recreation value

Missouri Wilderness Coalition

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The information depicted here as overlays was taken from various maps included with the USDA Forest Service 'Scoping Report, Southwest Project, Project Number 21888, Houston/Rolla/Cedar Creek Ranger District, Mark Twain National Forest, Boone and Callaway Counties, Missouri. April 2008.