

Appendix A – SUMMARY: Areas and Resources of Concern – Red Rock Trails Assessment

This document accompanies a map showing the location of each of these “concern” areas. This information is a summary of resource concerns that are being considered as part of the on-going decision process for a proposed temporary restriction to require bikes to stay on FS official trails in the most sensitive National Forest lands near Sedona/Big Park. For more information contact Recreation Staff Officer Jennifer Burns at 928-203-7529.

AREA 1 – TURKEY CREEK

Located near Village of Oak Creek. Numerous social trails in area, none “constructed”, resource damage from horse use originating from Verde Valley School and local horse properties.

Resources of concern:

- Predicted arch site densities extreme.
- Close to Oak Creek

Recommended action: Do not restrict bikes at this time, monitor use, actively plan for trails to meet user needs and work with users to consolidate/remove existing social trails. Especially work with horse users.

AREA 2 – SCHEURMANN MOUNTAIN

Small mountain area used for casual hiking, biking. Six and a half miles of user constructed bike trail, most to be physically closed this spring. These trails have been heavily marketed for bikers, leading to increased bike use and associated damage to soils.

Resources of concern:

- High botanical diversity
- High predicted archaeological site densities
- Steep slopes (erosion/incision)
- Close to Oak Creek

Recommended action: Temporary restriction of bikes to FS trails to prevent additional damage from increased use and ensure rehabilitation of closed routes. Use public planning process to identify trail needs for this area.

AREA 3 – DRY CREEK

Remote area along Dry Creek Canyon west of Sedona. Over 12 miles of user constructed bike routes. These routes follow contours of Dry Creek Canyon and connect with Girdner Trail and Cultural Park of Sedona, and trespass across private property. Heavily marketed for bikers; moderate to high use from bikers and hikers. Only one FS system trail located in this area.

Resources of concern:

- Potential high density of arch sites.
- Moderately steep slopes.

Recommended action: No restriction. Monitor expansion of use/trails. While there are steep slopes throughout, most user-created routes are on contour above Dry Creek Canyon. Plan trails in this area through public process.

AREA 4 – MESCAL MOUNTAIN

Area that has well developed and popular FS trail system. FS recently closed/restored 2 miles of user constructed trail (Tequila Sunrise trail) and is monitoring this closure. There does not appear to be additional unauthorized construction at this time.

Resources of concern:

- Extremely high potential for arch sites.

Recommended action: No restriction. Monitor expansion of use/trails. Active planning in 2013 to complete trail connections in this area.

AREA 5 – NORTH URBAN TRAILS

Area of high residential and tourist use, numerous popular FS trails and social trails. Recently FS added about 10 miles to the trail system in Soldiers Wash. Very little illegal construction: one incident in 2013 (construction of 1/3 mile trail in Wilderness – Coffee pot case).

Resources of concern:

- Extremely high potential for arch sites.
- Close to Oak Creek.

Recommended action: No restriction. Monitor use/trail increase.

AREA 6 – RNA/SCHNEBLY HILL

This is the area bounded by SR89A and Schnebly Hill Road and includes the Casner Canyon RNA. The RNA had 6 miles of user constructed bike routes, recently closed/restored. There is potential for damage to this area from bikers “down-hill” off-trail riding. Numerous popular FS trails exist outside the RNA, in this area, including recently added Hangover Trail popular for bikers and hikers.

Resources of concern:

- Research Natural Area
- Close to Oak Creek
- Steep slopes
- High potential for arch sites
- Peregrine falcon aeries

Recommended action: Temporary restriction of bikes to FS trails. Adequate and challenging legal trails in the area and trail users generally agree with protection of the RNA.

AREA 7 – ELEPHANT BUTTE (The “Hogs”)

This is the area south of Broken Arrow Road and north of Chapel of the Holy Cross. There are numerous social and user constructed bike routes in the area popular with residents and tourists. The trails have been heavily marketed for over a decade and FS is in active planning for addition of suitable trails in this area.

Resources of concern:

- Steep slopes (but shallow to bedrock)
- Potential for arch sites

Recommended action: Delay restriction until a system of trails is decided upon. Monitor for additional trail use/creation.

AREA 8 – BELL ROCK

Area of trails near Bell Rock, a heavily used area by tourists and residents. No known user construction on-going, however numerous social trails criss-cross the area.

Resources of concern:

- High predicted archaeological site densities
- Tribal concerns associated with the buttes

Recommended action: No bike restriction at this time. Monitor for expansion of trails.

AREA 9 – TRANSEPT

Area bounded on east by SR89A and west by Verde Valley School Road. Numerous challenging mountain bike and hike trails have been added in this area over the past 2 years including Hiline Trail. Lots of loop

options and connections to the north and east to other FS trails possible. Heavily marketed and popular for hikers and bikers. Has 3.5 miles of user constructed trail located unsustainably on west side of the “Transept” formation, called the Transept Trail. Increasing use, particularly by bikes, of this “trail” is worsening erosion on steep segments.

Resources of concern:

- Steep slopes
- High potential for arch sites
- Tribal concerns for areas close to Cathedral Rock
- Close to Oak Creek
- Peregrine falcon aerie’s

Recommended action: Temporary restriction of bikes to FS system trails. Plan for trail additions through public process.

AREA 10 – AIRPORT

Steep slopes surrounding the Sedona Airport which drain directly into Oak Creek and moderate slopes associated with Carroll Canyon, also draining into Oak Creek. Area is popular with residents and few tourists. Area has robust FS trail system and about 8 miles of user constructed routes criss-crossing the area. Continued proliferation of bike trails occurring.

Resources of concern:

- Close to Oak Creek
- Steep slopes with erosive soils
- High potential for arch sites

Recommended action: Temporary restriction of bikes to FS trails. Continue active planning to determine future trails in this area.