

2003 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM APPLICATION

SCPRT USE ONLY

Received: _____
Postmarked: _____
Application #: _____

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Sponsor USDA Forest Service, Sumter National Forest, Long Cane Ranger District

Contact Person Glen Kansanback

(The contact person is someone who will be in direct contact with SCPRT)

Title Planning Team Leader Email _____

Address ### Street

City Edgefield State SC Zip #####

Phone ###-###-#### Fax ###-###-####

Federal Tax Identification Number ##-#####

Type of Sponsor (check one)

- Federal Agency
- State Agency
- Local Agency
- Nonprofit Organization
- Forprofit Organization
- Other (explain) _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

Name of Trail Project Mecca Trails Project 2003

County(s) McCormick, Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood

Nearest City Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood

Project Address Please see attached maps. Nearest Cross Street Hwy 23, 28, 230, 283

US House District Number 3

State Senate District Number 10, 25 State House District Number 11, 12, 82

Land Classification (check one) **Public** Private Combination

If combination, please explain _____

Intended Use of Trail (check one)

- Motorized Trail Uses
- Nonmotorized Trail Uses
- Combination Motor/Nonmotorized Trail uses**

If combination, please explain Involves work on equestrian, mountain bike, and hiking trails, and improvement of ORV trailhead

User group (check all that apply)

- Hikers/walkers**
- Horseback riders**
- Accessible
- Trail/mountain bicyclists**
- Off-road vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, ATV's, OHV's)**
- Canoeist/kayakers/boaters

NARRATIVE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe the proposed project in the space provided.

Construct 10 new miles of re-routed trail on the Long Cane Horse Trail. Conduct maintenance and reconstruction work on the Horn Creek, Wine Creek, Turkey Creek and Stevens Creek Trails (mountain bicycle and hiking trails) that will include hardware cloth placement on approximately 32 bridges, vegetation clearing, downfall removal, and tread armoring and de-berming. Additionally, two concrete block "sweet smelling toilets" (SST's) will be installed as part of this project, one at the Parsons Mountain OHV Trailhead, and the other at the Cedar Springs OHV Trailhead.

PROJECT LOCATION

Topographic map

Provide 1 original and 5 copies of the 1:24,000 U.S. Geological Service (USGS) topographic map (or map portions, clearly marked with USGS quad name) which shows your complete project site. Indicate the project boundaries clearly on all maps.

A site map

Provide 1 original and 5 copies of a site map of the project itself. The maps must have a scale, a north arrow, and the route of the proposed trail or location of the trail facilities must be clearly indicated. If the project involves a combination of new trail construction and trail maintenance/restoration, the location of these two activities must be clearly marked along the length of the trail on the site map.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Estimated Project Budget

Include a detailed budget that includes all project activities and costs. List the source of all match funds.

Estimated Expenditures	Total Funds	RTP Funds Requested	Match Funds	Source of Match Funds
Personnel:				
Clearing, tread work, bridge repair	\$5,000		\$5,000	Volunteer
Supplies/Materials:				
Hardware Cloth/Tacks, Lumber	\$5,000		\$5,000	Non-federal
Culverts, Rip Rap, Seed, etc.				
Equipment:				
Purchase ATV and associated equipment (for trail maintenance, and law enforcement use)	\$10,000	\$10,000		
Contractual:				
Construct 10 miles of New Trail	\$100,000	\$100,000		
Construct 2 SST's at ORV Trailheads	\$50,000		\$50,000	USFS
Acquisition:				
Total:	\$170,000	\$110,000	\$60,000	

Total Project Costs \$ 170,000

RTP Funds Requested \$ 110,000 65% of Total Project Costs

Match Funds \$ 60,000 35% of Total Project Costs

Administrative staff time, overhead or indirect charges are not allowable charges.

Has the sponsor authorized and appropriated the financial resources to pay the total project costs as they are incurred?

Yes or No

Has the sponsor received funding from the recreational Trails Program in the past?

Yes or No

If yes, please list project names, project number, amount received and date completed:

Parsons Mountain OHV Trail Bridge, Project # 0104, bridge completed 12/14/01
(remaining funds were frozen during the Audit of the RTP program and grant agreement
extended).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SHEET

The description sheet will be used to assess the impact of your project on cultural and natural resources—its accurate completion cannot be overemphasized. If it is not completed, your application will not be considered for funding. Do not leave any sections blank, use N/A if appropriate.

Project Name: Mecca Trails Project 2003

Project Sponsor: USDA Forest Service, Sumter National Forest, Long Cane Ranger District

Landscape Description

1. How many acres in the site will be impacted by the proposed trail construction?
10 miles of new trail construction (4 foot wide) will impact 5 acres;
SST's will be located at existing trailheads and will not impact new ground

2. Describe the site's general land cover as accurately as possible (for example, 40% hardwoods, 30% pines, 30% open field)
70% Pines, 25% Hardwoods, 5% open

3. If there is water flowing or open water on the site, please describe it.
Portions of the project come within visual distance of Turkey, Wine, Stevens, Horn and Long Cane Creeks

4. If there is a Wild or Scenic River on the site, please list it.
N/A

5. If there is a wetland on the site, please describe it, noting the acreage it includes. Show its extent on the enclosed site map.
N/A

6. If there is a floodplain on the site, please describe it, noting the acreage it includes. Show its extent on the enclosed site map.
N/A

7. If there is a coastal zone area on the site, please describe it, noting the acreage it includes. Show its extent on the enclosed site map.

N/A

8. Describe the site's general topography as accurately as possible (for example, 40% steep bluffs, 40% floodplain, 20% gentle ridges)

90% gentle ridges (under 35% side slope), 10% steeper slopes (over 35% side slope) located in the piedmont physiographic province

9. What are the significant plant communities on the site? (for example, bottomland forests of sweetgum, tulip trees, and ash; part of site covered in honeysuckle) Include approximate age and size of trees.

Loblolly forest with intermittent hardwoods

10. What animal species have been noted on the site?

Whitetail deer, turkey, migrating neotropical birds, squirrel, box turtle

11. Has the site ever been identified as having a threatened or endangered species of plant or animal? Yes or No

If yes, what is the species? _____

Additional information to answer this question is available at the following web sites: <http://ecos.fws.gov/servlet/TESSWebpageUsaLists?state=SC>
http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/pls/heritage/county_species.select_county_map

12. Has the site ever been known or suspected to have hazardous wastes?

Yes or No

If yes, please list them and indicate their location on the site map. _____

13. Does the site contain any known historic or archaeological resources that are on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places? Yes or No

If yes, please list them and indicate them on the site map. _____

If yes, has the project been coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office? Yes or No

Explain Consultation with SHPO is a routine part of the USDA Forest Service's implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act. A Forest Service archeologist surveyed the project areas.

Construction Description

1. If your application is for construction of a new trail:

What is the proposed length? 10 miles

What is the proposed width of your trail? 48"

Of what material(s) is the trail tread constructed? Natural surface

2. If your application is for trail maintenance/rehabilitation/restoration:
 What is the length? 30 Miles
 What is the width of your trail? Generally singletrack 18"- 42"
 Of what material(s) is the trail tread constructed? Natural surface
3. Check the appropriate boxes to show all expected trail user groups:
- Hikers/walkers**
 - Horseback riders**
 - Accessible
 - Trail/mountain bicyclists**
 - Off-road vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, ATV's, OHV's)**
 - Canoeist/kayakers/boaters
4. Estimate the number of trail users per week per user group checked above.
Horseback 50, Mountain bike 100, Hikers 20, OHV's 400
- How were these estimates determined?
Use estimates are based on empirical observation, fee collections, and user preference studies.
5. If your application is for construction of trail facilities (for example, parking, restrooms, ramps, etc) what is the total area which will be impacted?
Less than 400 square feet at each OHV trailhead will be impacted by new SST's. The area to be impacted is not new since it is presently part of the existing parking area.
6. Please describe these facilities as completely as possible, including specific dimensions (for example, parking area of 70 ft by 85 ft) when relevant:
Two handicap accessible block SST's will be constructed at each OHV trailhead. A SST is a permanent toilet system made from concrete block upon a permanent foundation. The toilets will have a men and women room. The toilet system is designed to keep odors down to a minimum for areas around public concentration.
7. Please describe any construction impact mitigation practices that you will be using:
The trail will be built 48-54" wide by a professional crew trained to build trails with minimum impact techniques. No trees greater than 4" in diameter will be removed to create the new trail. New trail construction will be on the contour using the 50% rule (trail grade never exceeds 50% of the steepest side slope grade) at all times with a 5% out sloped tread. The approved design uses grade reversals and works with the land to shed water from the trail tread. The tread will be built down to minearal soil and the full bench construction methods will be used. Please see Exhibit 1. Rolling Grade Dips will be constructed throughout the trail to facilitate drainage. Culvert placement, rip rap rock, silt fence will be

used as needed. Maintenance of existing trails includes de-berming and grade reversals to allow for better drainage, armoring trails to mitigate user damage during seasonally wet periods.

8. Will the project's construction have any adverse affect on air quality?

Yes or **No**

If yes, please explain:

9. If this trail includes motorized use, please explain the potential for noise impacts on surrounding land uses:

N/A – Motorized trails are already in place. Project will simply enhance trail facilities by adding one SST to each trailhead (Parsons and Cedar Springs).

10. Have all required pre-construction permits and approvals been secured?

Yes or No – Approval to Cross a Public Highway

Yes or No – Approval to Cross a Public Utility Right-of-Way

Yes or No – Water Obstruction and Encroachment Permit

Yes or No – Wetlands Review

Yes or No – Erosion and Sedimentation Control

Yes or No – Building Permit

Yes or No – Sewage Permit

Yes or No – Water System Approval

Yes or No – Others: _____

If no, please explain:

No special permits are required for this project. The USFS used an interdisciplinary approach under the auspices of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to review many of the aforementioned topics.

Socioeconomic Description

1. Will the proposed project impact Health/Education Facilities?

Yes or No

Explain: The trails will most likely improve the physical and mental well being of the trail users. Additionally, improving the trails will enhance user experience, safety, and increase the number of people using the trails.

2. Will the proposed project impact Emergency Service Providers?

Yes or No

Explain: The improvements to the trails will aid search and rescue operations for lost or injured hunters or trail users.

3. Will the proposed project impact persons with disabilities, seniors, economically disadvantaged and other special populations?

Yes or No

Explain: The trails are a low cost (many are free access) recreational resource for any US citizen or visitor. Additionally, accessible toilets will be provided at the two ORV trailheads.

4. Will the proposed project impact Economic Activity?

Yes or **No**

Explain: Improving the trails will lead to more visitors. This has already been observed in the mountain bike community with the addition of over 20 miles of trail to the area. The Long Cane Horse Trail offers a unique riding experience sought by riders from outside the area.

5. Will the proposed project impact Public Utilities?

Yes or **No**

Explain: _____

6. Will the proposed project impact Local Tax Base?

Yes or **No**

Explain: _____

7. Will the proposed project impact Residential Areas?

Yes or **No**

Explain: _____

FIXED CRITERIA

- Most recent grant award (No response required for this section).
1999 or earlier - 10 points
2000 – 5 points
2001 – 0 points
- Grant Administration and Project Maintenance History
(No response required for this section).
0 – 25 points
- Project Readiness (Complete Project Description Sheet).
0 – 25 points

PROJECT CRITERIA

Please provide a written proposal that thoroughly answers each question as it pertains to your project in the order presented in the following outline. Projects will be rated on the information that you provide. Include as much supporting documentation as you deem necessary to convey to the graders that your project is needed, that it is supported by the general public, that it has been thoroughly planned, that adequate resources are available to execute the project and that resources are available to adequately maintain the project upon completion. Organize your documentation in a manner that is easily referenced (Notebook with tabs, etc.)

1. 0 - 20 points

How is the project consistent with the SC Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), SC State Trails Plan, State or any Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs, city, county, regional plan or the applicant's general plan?

The planning process for these trail projects began in 1996. They are addressed in the Mecca Regional Trail Plan, the first in a series of regional trail plans facilitated by the Palmetto Conservation Foundation in cooperation with several other partners and the local public. The Turkey, Wine and Stevens Creek Trails were also identified as key land based trails in the Stevens/Turkey Creek Blueway Plan, also developed by the Palmetto Conservation Foundation in partnership with State, regional and local governmental and private organizations.

These projects meet the intent of Goal 2 (Sustainability), Goal 4 (Multi-Use Opportunities), Goal 5 (Trails Built for Public Use) and Goal 6 (Trails should promote a healthy lifestyle) of the 2002 South Carolina State Trails Plan, and addresses priority 2 (increase managed trail mileage, availability, and facilities for a variety of trail uses) and 3 (maintain and improve existing parks and recreation facilities) identified in the 2002 DRAFT SC SCORP.

Finally, improving the sustainability of these trails (i.e. lowering their operation and maintenance costs and environmental impacts through proper trail design techniques) is a major objective of the Sumter National Forest Land Management Plan. This project is the natural continuation of an evolving plan that has seen the construction or re-opening of 39 miles of single-track (trails where users travel single file) backcountry multi-use recreational trails. The USFS has encouraged a policy of bringing all existing trails up to acceptable standards prior to adding a new mile of trail. The USFS has completed the NEPA on this re-designed and relocated trail route in 2002 for the LCHT. USFS soil, water, and other specialists have visited the relocated sections of trail on several occasions and concur that the work will improve user safety and satisfaction, as well as create a more sustainable trail.

2. 0 – 15 points

How will the project connect or complement other trails or result in the development of trail linkages?

Mountain Bikers can ride the Long Cane Horse Trail (LCHT) and connect to both the Cedar Springs and Parsons Mountain Motorized Trails. On a much broader scale, every trail from the southern most point of the Long Cane Ranger District to the northern most point have been connected by local off-road cyclists. To go from end to end, it usually takes 2-3 days. Each year more and more regional riders from Atlanta, Charleston and Savannah discover the “Mecca” of quality family style trails in the area. One feature that attracts the avid rider to this area is the ability to link several trails in a day or series of days. The most popular linkage on the Sumter is the combination of the Wine and Turkey Creek Trails for a 12-mile ride. For the more experienced rider, Stevens Creek Trail can be added to the mix to create a popular ride known as “The Connector”. This ride can range from 35-54 miles depending on the chosen route. A loop ride known as “The Dark Star” links the Horn Creek Trail to Wine, Turkey and Stevens Creek for a metric century distance of 62 miles. In 1999, The “Long Cane Massacre Ride” connected the LCHT, Cedar Springs, Parsons Mtn., Baker Creek, Wine Creek, Turkey Creek and Stevens Creek Trails in one long two-day ride.

3. 0 – 15 points

Are there cultural, historical, geographical, or scenic points of interest that contribute to the project?

The redesigned sections of the Long Cane Horse Trail (LCHT) traverse beautiful pine and hardwood valleys. The Largest Shagbark Hickory in the state is located on the LCHT. Additionally, the LCHT travels through a federally designated Scenic Area. The Turkey and Stevens Creek Trails wind along a river corridor proposed for National Wild and Scenic River designation in the Draft 2003 Sumter National Forest Revised Land Management Plan. This corridor has a number of “outstandingly remarkable values” that make it unique in the State.

4. 0 -- 15 points

Describe how the project provides for diversified recreational uses and/or trail corridor sharing.

The project covers trails that allow for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and motorized trail uses (through enhancement of motorized trailheads). All three non-motorized uses are allowed on the LCHT, while equestrian and mountain bike use are the highest uses. The LCHT is the closest mountain bike trail to Greenwood, SC and the use has increased ten fold in the last 4 years. Hiking and mountain biking are allowed uses on all the southern trails (Wine, Turkey, Stevens and Horn Creeks). Parsons and Cedar Springs ORV Trails allow ATV's, motorcycles, mountain bicycles and hikers.

5. 0 – 15 points

Describe the measures employed in the design of the trail that ensures the sustainability of the trail and minimizes negative environmental impacts.

Long-term sustainability is the number one issue addressed by the LCHT project. In 2001 the USFS worked closely with a trail design contractor to relocate critical sections of the trail onto the contour (side-slope alignment) staying within the limits of the 50% rule of thumb (i.e. trail grade never exceeds 50% of the steepest side-slope grade). The LCHT travels through some gorgeous backcountry in relatively large bowl shaped contours. The re-routes take the trail gently up and down the sides of these bowls sweeping past large hardwood trees. The old trail traveled straight up and down these same hills. The result has been severe gully erosion in places and multiple lines created by users over the years. These old trails make for good drainage for the re-route as the new line usually crosses the old line providing excellent drainage for the new trail. The new trail construction will be contracted out to USFS specifications concerning trail grade, proper drainage, construction of grade dips, 5% out slope, minimum clearing limits and corridor width.

On several of the southern trails (Turkey, Wine, Stevens and Horn) armoring will be added to low lying areas to raise the users out of seasonal muddy areas using volunteers.

6. 0 – 10 points

Describe the deficiency of similar opportunities in the project area.

The LCHT is the only equestrian trail on the Long Cane Ranger District and makes up most of the equestrian trail mileage in the area encompassing Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, McCormick, Laurens, Saluda and Lexington Counties. It is also the closest mountain bike trail to Greenwood. Without the LCHT, backcountry mountain biking would not be a possibility for the working citizens of Greenwood, SC during the week. The Cedar Springs and Parson's Mountain OHV trails are the only motorized trails on the Long Cane Ranger District, and the trails provide service to places as far away as Columbia, SC, and Augusta, GA.

7. 0 – 10 points

Describe how the trail will be managed. Include discussion on season length, hours of operation, limitations on use, enforcement provisions and scheduling.

The non OHV trails are open to the public year-round for both day and night interests. Interest in night bicycle riding by using artificial light is increasing. As part of the night-riding initiative by trail users, the Forest Service is beginning to mark the trails with reflective paint. Night trail use is not limited to bicycles, and other users can utilize these trails also. Motorized trail vehicles are allowed only on Parsons Mountain and Cedar Springs OHV Trails. The OHV trails are open March 31 through January 1. The USFS has law enforcement responsibilities for all of these trails.

8. 0 – 10 points

It is mandatory that an advertised public meeting be held solely for the purpose of discussing the proposed project. Attach a copy of proof of publication of advertisement(s). The advertisement(s) should indicate that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a RTP grant for the project site. Submit a list of attendees for each meeting (full name and address) and all comments from the public.

Attach any other supporting documentation that shows that the project has community/public support.

Examples: 1. Agenda/minutes of public meetings where this project was discussed. (Advisory Boards, City/County Council Meetings, planning/zoning boards, etc.)

2. Surveys to determine support. (Attach copy of results)

On September 20, 2001, the USFS conducted public scoping notice to the public. This process gives the general public a brief description of the proposed actions, and provides the public an opportunity to obtain further information and/or provide comments to the proposed action. The scoping notice was mailed to 153 people who are on the USFS official interested publics mailing list, and the scoping was published in the Augusta Chronicle legal ads department. Ten people sent in written comments to the public scoping, all of which supported the trails program. This process also involved communication and coordination with the State department of Archives and History. USFS employees have had field meetings to review the proposed actions with several interested trail users during the month of June, 2002.

The USFS has copies of the legal notice published in the paper, the letter sent to the 153 members of the public, field meeting documentation, and copies of the 10 letters supporting the action. Please see Exhibit 2.

9. 0 – 10 points

Describe how the project will facilitate access to and use of trails by persons with disabilities, seniors, economically disadvantaged and other special populations.

By relocating the LCHT onto the contour (side-hill), this trail will be more accessible to people with disabilities since among other things, the grades will be easier to negotiate. Trail maintenance activities on the southern trails (Turkey, Wine, Stevens and Horn Creeks) will also make them more “user friendly” and accessible to people with disabilities. The LCHT is close to Greenwood, and the Horn Creek Trail is close to Edgefield, facilitating their use by economically disadvantaged people in these communities. The SST’s to be installed at the two motorized trailheads will be accessible to people with disabilities.

10. 0 – 10 points

Describe the degree of commitment to continue operation and maintenance of the project. Include an operations and maintenance plan detailing the annual estimated cost of operating and maintaining the trail. Identify who will incur the cost and who will be responsible for the work.

The USFS has a trail machine (SWECO) that is used on portions of these trails for lite and heavy maintenance. Appropriated and fee revenue dollars are budgeted each year for trail maintenance work which is leveraged with volunteers and partners. The USFS has employees who conduct trail maintenance as well as coordinate work outings with partners and volunteers. The USFS has developed a strong volunteer program with volunteers from mountain bicycle groups, motorized, equestrian, and Boy Scouts contributing hundreds of hours each year to the public trails.

The Southern Off-road Bicycle Association (SORBA) has helped maintain these trails for the past 6 years, and is committed to maintaining a partnership with the USFS. SORBA has the equipment necessary to keep the trails open and has several members that are certified to operate chainsaws (remove downfall) on the USFS trails. The South Carolina Off Road Enthusiast (SCORE) has also contributed significant time in maintaining the OHV trails.

11. 0 – 10 points

Describe in detail and thoroughly document how this project involves interagency cooperation, public/private partnerships and volunteer services.

The USFS has several active partnerships with volunteers on the Long Cane District. SORBA, SCORE, and a local equestrian group have been actively involved in the development and maintenance of trails on and around the Long Cane District. In 1996, the USFS co-hosted the first Mecca Trails Association meeting at the McCormick Chamber of Commerce. Several State Park Superintendents, SCPRT Trails Coordinator, Army Corp of Engineers, local equestrians and cyclists attended this meeting and several that followed. Although formal meetings have stopped, the action items in the Mecca Trails Regional Plan continue to be implemented. Since 1997, this partnership has teamed volunteers and professional trail contractors with State Parks to build 21 miles of new sustainable trail. Also together with the USFS, the partnership has opened 20 miles of heavily vegetated trail and turned them into jewels for mountain biking, hiking and equestrian use. SORBA has seven members certified to operate chainsaws in the National Forests. Highly efficient workdays with trained crew leaders and crews who understand what to do are held as needed. These volunteers have built trail, opened old trails clogged with stinging nettle, and removed downed trees from trails since before the creation of the RTP program.

SPECIAL PRIORITY

Use up to 1 page to describe the project and how it relates to the special priority section.

- Acquisition of land that will provide mileage for motorized trails will receive up to 25 additional points.
- Development projects that will provide new motorized trails will be eligible for up to 25 additional points.
- Rehabilitation or maintenance projects that are necessary to keep a motorized trail open will be eligible for up to 10 additional points.

A portion of this project is focused on enhancing the quality of the experience on two motorized trails on the Long Cane Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest. Specifically, this project involves constructing double concrete block “sweet smelling toilets” (SST’s) at both the Parsons Mountain OHV Trail, and the Cedar Springs ATV Trail. This has been a key customer satisfaction issue and request by a number of trail enthusiasts frequenting these facilities on National Forest lands, in particular the ladies.

LAND OWNER/MANAGER APPROVAL

As the official responsible for management of the land or land owner on which the project will be accomplished, I agree to the following:

1. The trail project or facility will remain accessible for public use for not less than 10 years.
2. The project as described in this application has my approval.
3. If this project is located on federal lands, the project is in compliance with the all applicable laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act, The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Signature

Title

Printed Name

Date

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate. I understand this application will be rated on the basis of the information submitted and the submission of incorrect data or an incomplete application can result in this application being withdrawn from consideration for funding.

I certify the sponsor will comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations.

I certify the availability resources required to complete this project as represented in this application.

I certify the sponsor has the ability and intent to provide for long term management, maintenance and operation of the project.

I further certify that I have the authority to apply for this grant on behalf of the project sponsor.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Project Contact

Title

Printed Name

Date