



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HUNTINGTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
502 EIGHTH STREET
HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701-2070

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

January 30, 2007

Planning, Programs, & Project Management Division
Project Management Branch

Subject: Recommendations concerning the U.S. Forest Service's proposed reroute of Raven's Ridge Trail at the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area

Jim Markley
Cheat-Potomac Ranger District
Monongahela National Forest
U.S. Forest Service
P.O. Box 368
Parsons, WV 26287

Dear Mr. Markley,

This letter is in response to your recent request for recommendations concerning trail relocation activities, which the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has proposed along a portion of the Raven's Ridge Trail in the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area of the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia. The work purpose is to relocate approximately 0.5-miles of the Raven's Ridge Trail from the current location on privately owned property onto USFS owned property. It is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) understanding that the work will be non-intrusive and mainly consist of minimal tree and brush removal.

On June 1, 2005, Erich Guy of the USACE, Huntington District, and John Younghans of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center (Huntsville) met with you at the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area and performed an ordnance avoidance escort and a visual surface inspection to support USFS's proposed work. From the point where the trail reroute starts to where it ties back into the original trail, a visual and equipment- (magnetometer) assisted survey was conducted, with no surface ordnance-related material anomalies discovered. There were five sub-surface magnetic anomalies found at depth along the proposed trail. The proposed Raven's Ridge Trail alignment had been previously flagged by USFS personnel and was inspected from the proposed trail centerline to approximately 6-feet on either side.

Due to the lack of munitions and explosives of concern (MEC), discarded military munitions (DMM), and munitions debris observed during the June 1, 2005 inspection at the proposed Raven's Ridge Trail relocation work area and the understanding that trail development work will be non-intrusive, a conclusion may be drawn that the probability of encountering such materials during work could be considered low. This conclusion is only valid for the portion of the proposed trail which Mr. Guy and Mr. Younghans surveyed on June 1, 2005. Any variance on the layout of the trail from the June 1, 2005 survey would invalidate this recommendation. It should also be noted that USACE's recommendation is being made at this time and not at the time of the original survey due to the USFS' cancellation of plans to reroute the trail following

the escort. Based on a phone conversation on January 8, 2007 between Nickolas McHenry, USACE, and Jim Markley, USFS, it is understood that the USFS is resuming plans to reroute this section of Raven's Ridge trail during Fiscal Year 2007.

Procedures that are already in place to notify appropriate personnel upon finding ordnance and explosives (OE) would be sufficient to support construction with a low probability. Following procedures, if personnel encounter any known or suspected OE, they should immediately withdraw from the area and report the find via the regional 24-hour OE hotline: 1-888-283-0303. Considering the region's use as a World War II maneuver and training area, and that OE has previously been found in the general vicinity of the proposed work area, the possibility of encountering OE cannot be ruled out. Therefore, the contracting of qualified unexploded ordnance (UXO) personnel by the USFS, to perform UXO avoidance activities prior to and in conjunction with the proposed work, would reduce any existing potential for injury or death caused by contact with unsuspected UXO during work. Given the low probability of encountering OE along with the fact that the possibility of encountering OE cannot be ruled out, the use of qualified UXO personnel for OE avoidance by the USFS is a Risk Management decision. While USACE typically advocates use of all measures reasonably possible to minimize risk with respect to safety, the final decision to proceed with the proposed project with or without a UXO Avoidance Contractor is at the discretion of the USFS.

Based on previous UXO clearance activities that have taken place on trails in the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, it is the intention of the USACE to further monitor the new layout of the Raven's Ridge Trail and consider further UXO clearance options of this trail to match what was previously done on similar trails in this area. If the USFS's proposed work plans change or if additional work is to be performed along the Raven's Ridge Trail reroute in the future, USACE should again be contacted for guidance before work proceeds.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Project Manager, Richard Meadows, at (304) 399-5388 or Nickolas McHenry at (304) 399-5909.

Sincerely,

Coy Miller
Deputy District Engineer
Planning, Programs and Project Management