

## **FY2004 FUDS Success Stories – USACE Huntington District**

### **West Virginia Maneuver Area – Dolly Sods Region Grant, Randolph, and Tucker Counties, West Virginia**

#### 1.0 Project Description:

The Dolly Sods region is part of the West Virginia Maneuver Area (WVMA). During World War II, the WVMA was used for military maneuver exercises, and for artillery and mortar practice, which led to unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination. The remoteness, limited human influences, and scenic qualities (*Figure 1*) of Dolly Sods (comprised of more than 18,000 acres) have annually attracted up to 76,000 visitors. Previous remedial actions were conducted by the USACE Huntington District, and have significantly reduced the amount of UXO posing a hazard to the public in the most widely used areas of Dolly Sods. However, previous removals could not, and were not expected to negate ordnance-related risk entirely, due to numerous conditions and facts. The existing risk at Dolly Sods is illustrated by the sporadic but continuous discovery of UXO.

#### 2.0 FY2004 Successes:

##### **2.1 Ordnance Removal Action Functioning as Intended**

USACE completed an ordnance and explosives (OE) recurring review of the Dolly Sods project. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the implemented 1997 to 1998 ordnance removal action continues to minimize explosives safety risks and continues to be protective of human health, safety, and the environment. The review process consisted of the following activities: the notification and involvement of stakeholders, the review of existing and relevant documentation and data, the identification and review of recent and new information, a community survey and public interviews, and an assessment of site conditions (*Figure 2*). The review concluded that the removal action is functioning as intended; it is still protective of human health, safety, and the environment. No UXO or OE-related scrap were identified during the site assessment, nor were any OE concerns due to erosion, storm damage, changes in land-use or recreational use found. Vegetation provides soil stability across most of the region, and site conditions and usage have not changed noticeably since the removal action. Further, mountainous and rugged terrain along with dense vegetation makes human access to many portions of the region that were not cleared for ordnance difficult.

##### **2.2 Public Awareness Program Being Implemented**

The USACE is implementing a broad Public Awareness Program to educate the public on how to safely enjoy the Dolly Sods Region of the former West Virginia Maneuver Area. The program provides the public with informational brochures, presentations, videos, and safety messages delivered by Wally the Woodchuck (*Figure 3*) – the newly developed project mascot whose objective is to better educate children. New UXO warning signs were designed and have been placed in highly visited areas of the region. The program also educates local officials and volunteers on how to safely respond to an emergency in the DSR. One tool of the program is to provide visitors with an accurate trails map for the DSR, for the purpose of facilitating use of trails that have been cleared of ordnance; the USACE, with assistance from the U.S. Forest Service developed the new map using a Geographic Information System (GIS). The detailed 11x17 inch map (*Figure 4*) provides information on topography, trail locations and distances, landmarks, regional boundaries, roads, and Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) NAD83 coordinate values. Nineteen trails which have been cleared for

ordnance, and which total almost 50 miles in length, were plotted on the map using global positioning system (GPS) data.

### **2.3 Effective Partnering Contributes to Project Successes**

In order to facilitate multi-agency communications and expedite project-related decisions, a team comprised of USACE Huntington District, USACE OE Center of Expertise, USFS, WVDEP, West Virginia Division of Forestry, and contractor personnel entered into a neutrally facilitated partnering process. To ensure that community members are effectively educated about the risk of UXO at Dolly Sods, the team further developed and updated a community awareness plan. The team continues to work together to improve institutional controls in the project area, to distribute public educational materials, and to maintain an up-to-date fire suppression / safety plan.

### **2.4 Public Involvement**

The public was updated on the status of the project by USACE and its contractors at a public meeting, and through the publication and distribution of project-related FUDS newsletter articles. An article containing background information about the project, a safety message, and information about the new trails map developed was published in Weekend Adventures magazine. A toll-free phone number, a public repository, and a web site were also maintained to serve as public information resources.

### **3.0 USACE Points of Contact:**

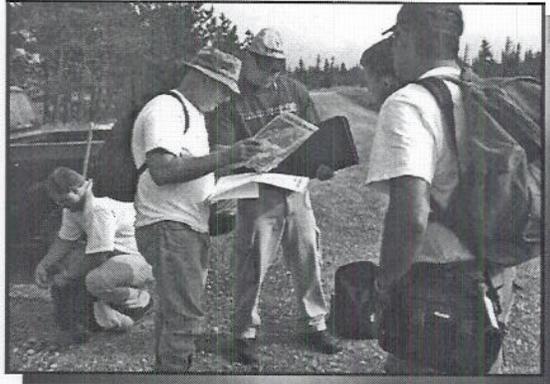
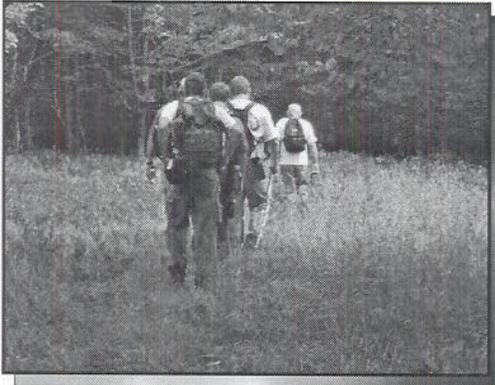
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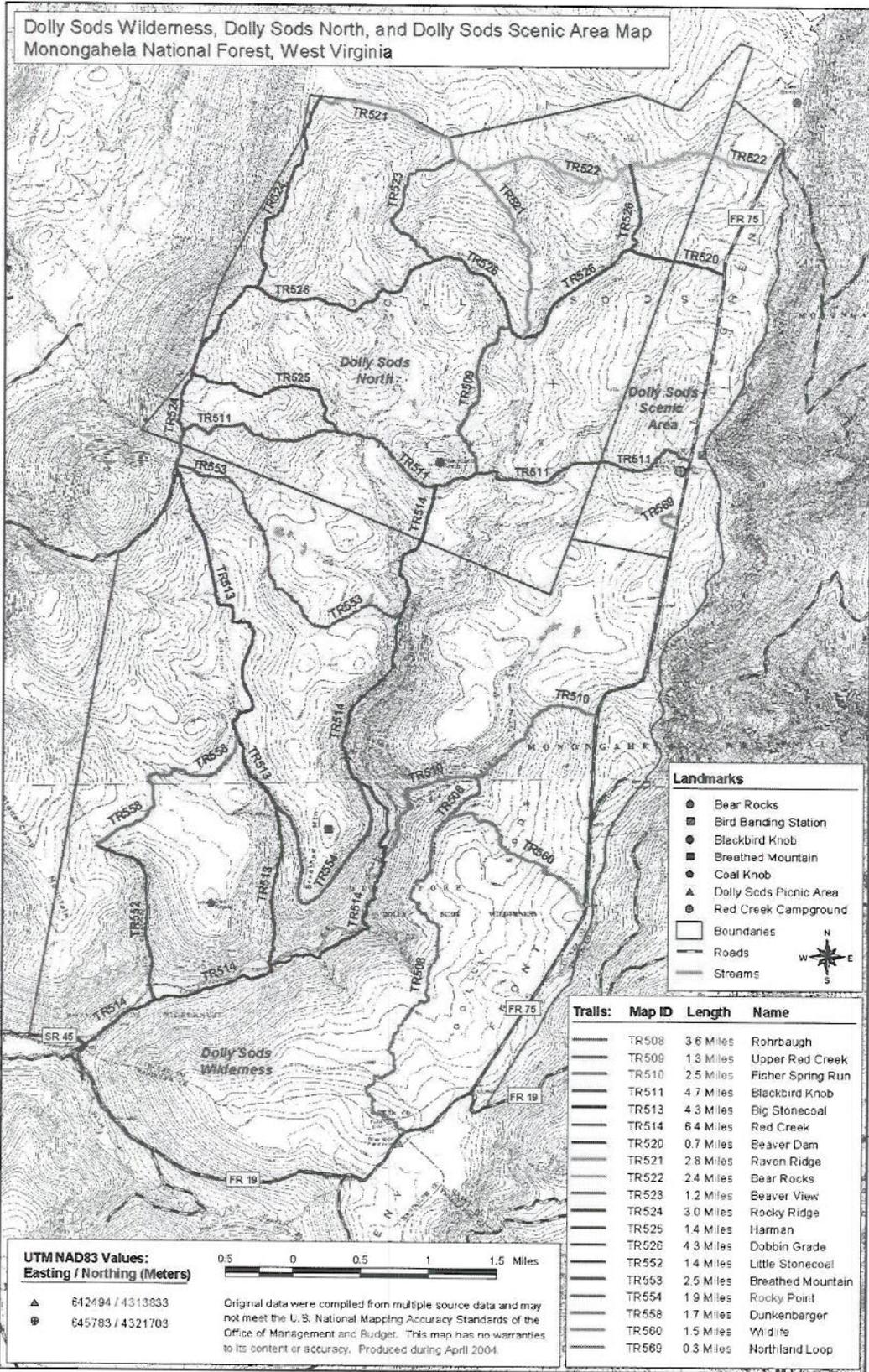
*Figure 1. Dolly Sods North Scenic View*



*Figure 2. USACE Personnel Conducting Recurring Review Field Work at Dolly Sods*



*Figure 3. UXO Safety Rules Provided by Wally the Woodchuck*



**Figure 4. New Dolly Sods Region Hiking Trails Map**