

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chatsworth, GA — The USDA Forest Service recently announced the grand opening of the 26-mile Dry Creek Trail System on the Chattahoochee National Forest in northwest Georgia. After several years of planning, new trails were built from the ground up to create a safer, more maintainable, and ecologically sustainable trail system from an unplanned network of older trails that did not meet current trail standards. Over \$448,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) funds made a project of the size possible, providing a safer and more satisfying experience for horseback riders, hikers, and mountain bikers.

According to Chattahoochee-Oconee Forest Supervisor George Bain, “the success of this large trails project would not have been possible were it not for this funding and the involvement of our partners, the Back Country Horsemen of America and others. This partnership is a perfect example of the collaboration the forest is striving for in the management its trails program”. Five miles of old trail were closed and rehabilitated and 26 miles of new trail were surveyed, planned, and constructed.

Five years ago, Larry Wheat, President of the North West Georgia chapter of the BCHA, had the inspiration to design and push forward the development of a new 26 mile Dry Creek trail system. Larry spent hundreds upon hundreds of hours laying out, designing and working with the FS to construct a system that met or exceeded new trail construction requirements. Larry, with his calm demeanor and in-depth knowledge championed this trail system to success and over the hurdles that such projects encounter.

The public was invited to a grand opening celebration on June 25, 2011. Festivities began at the Dry Creek Trailhead at 11AM. Refreshments were served and free, guided trail rides were offered. The Dry Creek Trail System and the connecting Pinhoti Trail are easy to moderate trails open to hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. The large trailhead parking area accommodates horse trailers as well as passenger cars.

Back Country Horsemen of America is a volunteer service organization dedicated to: perpetuating the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America’s back country and wilderness; working to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use; assisting the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource; educating, encouraging and soliciting active participation in the wise use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage; and fostering and encouraging the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen organizations.

Since 1995 BCHA members have contributed over \$63 million dollars in volunteer value to the US National Forest Service, the Federal Bureau of Land Management, various state land agencies throughout the US. BCHA is the largest volunteer contributor to federal land management agencies. For more information please visit:
<http://www.backcountryhorse.com>

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