



August 3, 2007

To all interested trail riders in Georgia and beyond:

Back Country Horsemen of Middle and South Georgia is concerned about the recent focus of the Forest Service to reinstate the decision to limit horse travel to designated trails and roads in the National Forest. As a Board, we have voted unanimously to support an appeal should it become necessary.

We applaud and support all of the volunteer work that goes on in Georgia and vow to continue to work on trails development, maintenance and preservation along side the FS. Our position is not personal, and should not be viewed as an attack on the FS, we are simply following the protocol outlined by the FS for objection to any ruling they should make.

In that environmental impact studies dictated in the ROD handed down in June of 2006 have not been completed by the National Forest Services, we feel this ruling is arbitrary. It has a much broader impact than first appears. The basis for limiting horses to designated trails is that horse travel harms the Forest whenever they go cross-country. There is not enough concrete evidence that cross country horse travel causes harm to the forest and to allow this sets an extremely dangerous precedent. It labels our activity as inherently harmful to the Forest, both in the Forest Service's eyes and in the mindset of the public. Additionally, we take exception to the fact this potential ruling will apply to only the Oconee and Chattahoochee National Forest Land and not the Cherokee National Forest. In our view this is contradictory.

We are committed to preserving horse trails and access on public lands in Georgia. It is inconceivable that we would not do everything in our power to oppose this move.

Sincerely

Tina Maddox, President  
Back Country Horsemen of Middle and South Georgia (BCHSG)