



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

New River Gorge National River Hike and Bike Trail Plan

Public Scoping Meeting
December 8, 2009





Tonight's Presentation and Meeting

Presentation

- Project background
- Process
- Questions

Break Out Session

- Share your ideas, issues, concerns and questions
- We'll collect your input
- 3 stations: Craig Branch, Garden Ground and Existing Trails



New River Gorge National River
Hike and Bike Trail Plan

New River Gorge National River

72,000 acres in the heart of Southern West Virginia





New River Gorge National River

A Unit of the National Park System





Planning Process and Project Timeline

1. *Scoping – Internal and Public Oct 09 – Jan/Feb 10
 - Collect input and ideas, identify issues and concerns that need to be considered and analyzed
2. Develop and Evaluate Alternatives Jan/Feb – Apr/May 10
 - Develop alternative approaches to the project based on scoping input, analyze potential impacts to resources
3. Prepare and Publish Draft Plan Apr/May – June 10



Planning Process and Project Timeline



Project Background

Needs were identified during public scoping for the New River Gorge National River General Management Plan

- More single track trails
- More loop opportunities on trails in and around the park
- Bike use allowed on existing and new park trails

In the long term, the park expects to develop a comprehensive trail plan

In the short term, the park has received limited funding for this project



Project Background

The proposed project is

- Consideration of a stacked loop hike and bike trail system in the Craig Branch area (also called the Berwind Tract)
- Consideration of a stacked loop hike and bike trail system in the Garden Ground area
- Analysis of potential impacts of bicycle use on the two proposed stacked loop systems and on existing trails and administrative roads within the park
 - Purpose: to pursue a special rule



Project Background

Craig Branch Area (also called the Berwind Tract)

- Approximately 550 acres
- Recent park land acquisition, area was previously mined and logged
- Easy connectivity to existing park trails, more loop opportunities
- Adjacent to existing high use areas and close to population/tourism center of Fayetteville
- In the Draft GMP, this is a Frontcountry Zone
 - Large forest blocks
 - Minor forest fragmentation
 - Moderate impact recreation
 - Visitor use is low to moderate



Project Background

Garden Ground Area

- Approximately 3500 acres
- Recent park land acquisition, area was previously mined and logged
- Project would provide new recreational trail opportunities that are more accessible from Beckley and Mt. Hope – areas that have had few such opportunities
- In the Draft GMP, this is a Backcountry Zone
 - Large forest blocks
 - Negligible forest fragmentation
 - Low impact primitive recreation
 - Visitor use is generally low



Project Background

Existing Park Trails and Administrative Roads

- NPS will analyze the environmental impacts of allowing bicycle use on some existing park trails and administrative roads
- For those trails and roads where use is deemed appropriate, the park will pursue a special rule in the Code of Federal Regulations to allow bicycle use

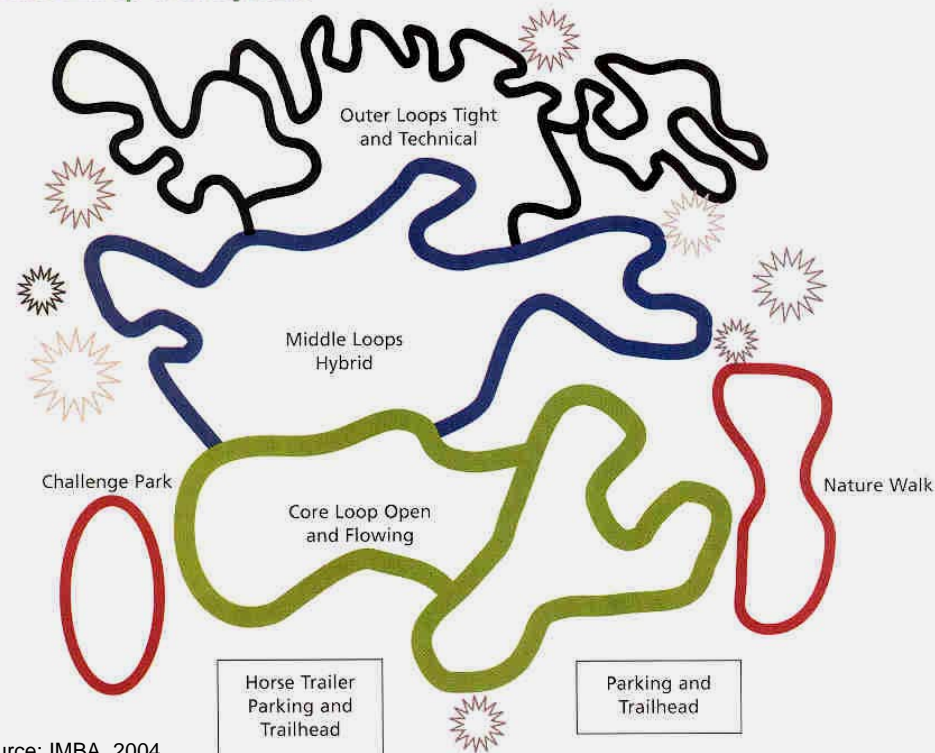


Stacked Loop Trail Systems

Provide a variety of recreational opportunities to trail users of all skill levels

- Novice: wide trails, easy grades, shorter distances
- Intermediate: more technically challenging, longer distances
- Expert: narrow trails, highly technical terrain, long distances

Stacked Loop Trail System



Source: IMBA, 2004



Frequently Asked Questions

How many miles of new trail would be built?

- The scoping and analysis processes will determine the answer to this, but around 15 miles in the Craig Branch area and 20 to 25 miles in the Garden Ground area may potentially be considered

Would the new stacked loop trails link to existing trails?

- Yes, there would be a variety of opportunities for bigger loops. See the maps at the breakout stations.

Would the new trails be gravel roads or single track?

- They are intended to be single track trails, though some sections of trail would be wider to accommodate novice riders and families hiking or biking together.



Frequently Asked Questions

Would hunting still be allowed?

- Yes, and hunters will have more trails available to easily access more of these areas, as well as parking.
- The park would sign the trailheads to make hikers and bikers aware of hunting seasons and safety.

Will I be able to ride my horse on the stacked loop trails?

- No, but a system of horse trails may be under consideration in the future.



Breakout Session Goals

What are your goals, hopes and dreams for these trails?

- Share your ideas and insights
- What issues are you concerned about?
- Give us your suggestions

We will do our best to

- Record your input
- Answer your questions





To Submit Your Input and Comments

Participate tonight

Mail back comment forms

- Fill them out and turn them in, or mail them

Postal mail

- NPS New River Gorge
Attn: Jamie Fields
PO Box 246
Glen Jean, WV 25846

Online

- Go to the New River Gorge home page
www.nps.gov/neri
- Under Quicklinks, select “Park Planning”
- Select “Hiking and Bicycling Trail Plan”
- Submit comments through the “Open for Public Comment” section



Thank you!

