

# Fall Creek A-OK Corral Permit Relocation



## Scoping Document

Bridger-Teton National Forest  
Jackson Ranger District, Teton County, Wyoming  
April 20, 2023

### INTRODUCTION

The Jackson Ranger District of the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) is seeking your input on the Fall Creek A-OK Corral Permit Relocation project, located about 10 miles southwest of Jackson, WY. BTNF has received a proposal from A-OK Corral, (A-OK) to move their outfitter and guide operations from their current location at Horse Creek to the North Fork of Fall Creek and assume the existing outfittering and guiding authorizations in the area. The proposal includes moving day horseback rides from Horse Creek to Fall Creek, continuing the overnight horseback riding trips (progressive travel) and hunting currently authorized at Fall Creek, and using and improving the existing base camp area along the North Fork of Fall Creek.



Figure 1. North Fork of Fall Creek Base Camp platform tent.

### PURPOSE AND NEED

The need for the project is driven by BTNF's responsibility to respond to applications for special uses on the forest. The BTNF Land and Resource Management Plan (forest plan) Goal 1.1 is that "communities continue or gain greater prosperity" by providing "undisturbed areas of use by outfitter and guide

clients” (Objective 1.1(e)). The forest plan directs managers to provide the full range of recreation opportunities, managed to create a balance of public and private uses responsive to local, regional, and national demand (Recreation Prescription). The project aligns with the forest plan by offering recreational opportunities for the thriving tourist industry in the world-renown Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, while balancing private and local uses of the Fall Creek area.

The need for A-OK to alter their permit stems from the loss of their current base camp area. A-OK currently has a special use permit to provide guided day-use horseback rides in the Horse Creek area of the Jackson Ranger District. The private property where A-OK has traditionally based operations has been donated to Jackson Hole Community Housing Trust for affordable housing for county first responders. To secure a base of operations, A-OK has entered into an agreement to purchase Long Draw Outfitters (Long Draw), which operates in the North Fork of Fall Creek. A-OK is proposing to move their daily horseback riding operations to the North Fork of Fall Creek and to combine the A-OK day-use permit with Long Draw’s existing permits.

The sites assigned to Long Draw have been used for commercial guiding since at least 1971, with hunting as the traditional primary activity. Summer progressive travel was added to Long Draw’s permit, as well as reinstating the transfer corral back to its original application as a base camp, when Long Draw bought another guiding business in 2016. The base camp operations were approved by BTNF in the 2017 Fall Creek Base Camp Decision Memo. For more information about the 2017 project, visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51226>.

## PROPOSED ACTION

A-OK proposes to operate its outfitting and guiding business within the Fall Creek area and cease operations in Horse Creek. They would use the base camp located near the end of the North Fork of Fall Creek Road, National Forest System (NFS) RD #30995, within Township 39 North, Range 117 West, Section 5, 6th Principal Meridian (see enclosed maps). The second assigned site is a backcountry camp in the Palisades Wilderness Study Area (WSA), on the South Fork of Fall Creek, within T. 39 N., R. 117 W., sec. 17, called the “upper camp”. Both sites are currently permitted for summer and fall uses to Long Draw. A-OK would continue to provide the services authorized in Long Draw’s permits, which includes the base camp, progressive travel, and hunting from the base and upper camp; with the addition of operating the summer day use horseback rides (currently permitted to them at Horse Creek) from the base camp area. The proposal includes converting 200 of the 500 service days assigned for guided hunting into summer progressive travel service days, as well as adding grazing at the upper camp to account for loss of motorized hay delivery (more details below).

The number of service days would not change district wide. This transfer and conversion of days would allow for service days to be removed from the Gros Ventre Wilderness as well as reduce the amount of service days currently authorized for guided hunting in the Fall Creek area.

A-OK would use existing NFS trails, which would be approved by BTNF staff. Any request to use existing, non-NFS trails would need to be approved by the FS authorized officer.

The proposal also includes improvements to the base camp, the public parking area, and the North Fork of Fall Creek Road. The total new disturbance would be about 1 acre added on to the existing 3.5 acres permitted for the base area. A-OK proposes to:

- Create a guest and employee parking area west of the base camp by leveling the area, clearing

vegetation, and armoring with gravel if necessary, approximately 0.25 acres.

- Install a spring box into the source of an intermittent stream north of the base camp and install a buried waterline from the spring box to the camp, no greater than 800 feet long. The base camp already collects water from the stream, but A-OK is seeking to improve water quality.
- Install temporary directional signs along the North Fork of Fall Creek Rd during the operating season.
- Partner with BTNF in managing road improvements on the North Fork Fall Creek Road (3.25 miles) to maintain access to the base camp for passenger vehicles.
- Move the trailhead gate 150 feet to the east to allow for a vehicle turn around area.
- Enhance the trailhead parking area by leveling and hardening area with gravel, approximately 0.25 acres.

Lastly, the project includes decommissioning NFS RD 30995 from the trailhead gate to the upper camp. The road predates the WSA and has not been open to wheeled motorized vehicle use since the 1984 WSA designation, it is not an authorized road within the BTNF travel plan. Since the WSA designation, the FS has allowed a “grandfathered” use of the road by outfitters to deliver hay and other supplies to the upper camp by motor vehicle. With the business transfer to A-OK, motorized use would be discontinued, and the road would be converted to a Class 3 non-motorized trail. BTNF would use motorized equipment to repair or remove existing perched culverts and a bridge along the trail to enhance watershed values that are currently impaired by the unmaintained legacy road infrastructure. Removing this dilapidated infrastructure will also enhance the natural and undeveloped elements of Wilderness Character within Palisades Wilderness Study Area.

#### IMPLEMENTATION TIMING

The project improvements would be implemented during the Summer/Fall seasons in 2023 and 2024. Special use permits for outfitting and guiding are issued for a 10-year term.

#### CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The Council of Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1501.4) provide for categorical exclusions (CE) to allow Federal agencies to exclude certain categories of actions from documentation in an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the proposed action is within categories listed in FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30. The proposed action is expected to fall within the CE categories:

**36 CFR 220.6(d)(12):** Issuance of a new authorization or amendment of an existing authorization for recreation special uses that occur on existing roads or trails, in existing facilities, in existing recreation sites, or in areas where such activities are allowed.

*This category applies to changing various types of outfitter and guide user days from Horse Creek to Fall Creek.*

**36 CFR 220.6(e)(3):** Approval, modification, or continuation of special uses that require less than 20 acres of NFS lands.

*This category applies to modifications to the North Fork of Fall Creek base camp.*

**36 CFR 220.6(e)(20):** Activities that restore, rehabilitate, or stabilize lands occupied by roads and trails, including unauthorized roads and trails and National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails, to a more natural condition that may include removing, replacing, or modifying drainage structures and ditches, reestablishing vegetation, reshaping natural contours and slopes, reestablishing drainage-ways, or other activities that would restore site productivity and reduce environmental impacts.

*This category applies to decommissioning NFS RD 30995 to a trail within the WSA.*

**36 CFR 220.6(e)(23):** Road management activities on up to 8 miles of NFS roads and associated parking areas. Activities under this category cannot include construction or realignment.

*This category applies to improving the public parking area near the base camp and road management on FS Rd 30995 by the FS and A-OK Corral.*

Jackson District Ranger, Todd Stiles will be the deciding officer on this project.

If this project is analyzed under a CE, as described in the Forest Service National Environmental Policy Act regulations (36 CFR 220), it would not be subject to pre-decisional administrative review (36 CFR 218). The decision would be subject to post decisional administrative review process (36 CFR 214).

#### HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

We are interested in your comments on the proposal. Comments received in response to this solicitation will be part of the public record. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this proposed action will be accepted for 14 calendar days, until May 5, 2023.

Electronic comments may be submitted by selecting the "Comment on Project" button on the right menu of the project webpage at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=63782>. Written comments must be submitted to: District Ranger Todd Stiles, Bridger-Teton National Forest–Jackson Ranger District, 340 N Cache (UPS/FedEx), P.O. Box 1689 (USPS), Jackson, WY 83001, Attn: Fall Creek A-OK Corral. Comments may be hand-delivered to the district office between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Please feel free to pass this letter on to others you think may have an interest or concern with this project. For any questions, contact the project lead Jessica Shaw at (307) 739-5426.

Sincerely,



TODD STILES  
District Ranger

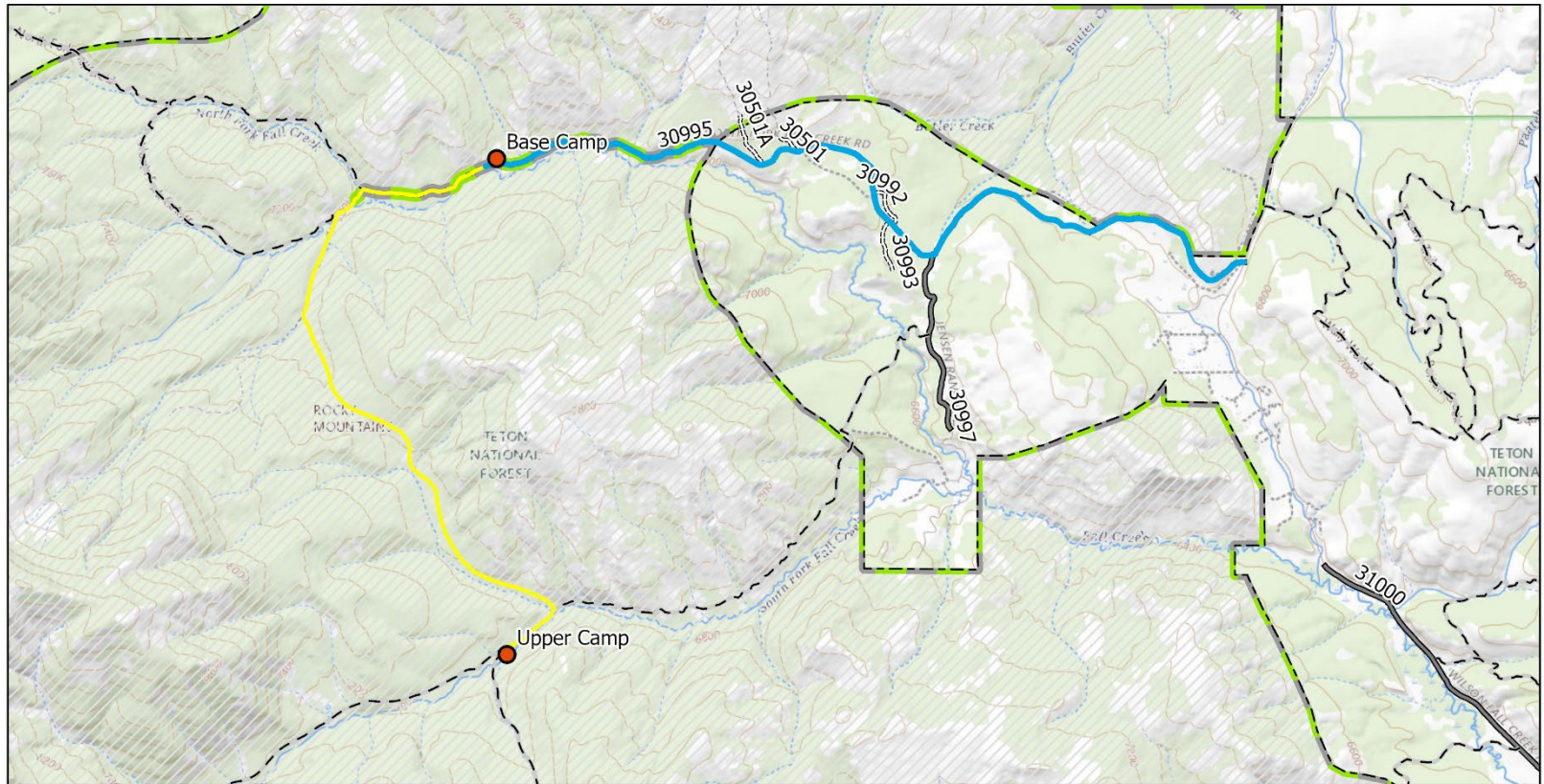
Enclosure: Maps of Proposed Action





# Fall Creek A-OK Corral Permit Relocation Project - Area Map

## Bridger-Teton National Forest, Jackson Ranger District



### Legend

- Camps
- Decommission to Trail
- Road Maintenance
- National Forest System Trails
- High Clearance Vehicles: 2
- Passenger Cars: 3, 4, 5
- Wilderness Study Areas



NAD 1983  
UTM Zone  
12N

### Disclaimer

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Service Layer Credit: USGS Topo



Map Author: mradue; Map Creation Date: 4/17/2023





# Fall Creek A-OK Corral Permit Relocation Project - Base Camp

## Bridger-Teton National Forest, Jackson Ranger District



### Legend

- Existing Base Camp
- Proposed Improvements
- Proposed Water Line
- National Forest System Trails
- NFS Roads
- Passenger Cars: 3, 4, 5

0 200 400 600 Feet



NAD 1983  
UTM Zone  
12N

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