

RDU Forest / Umstead Trail Center Proposal

1/14/2020

Proposed By:

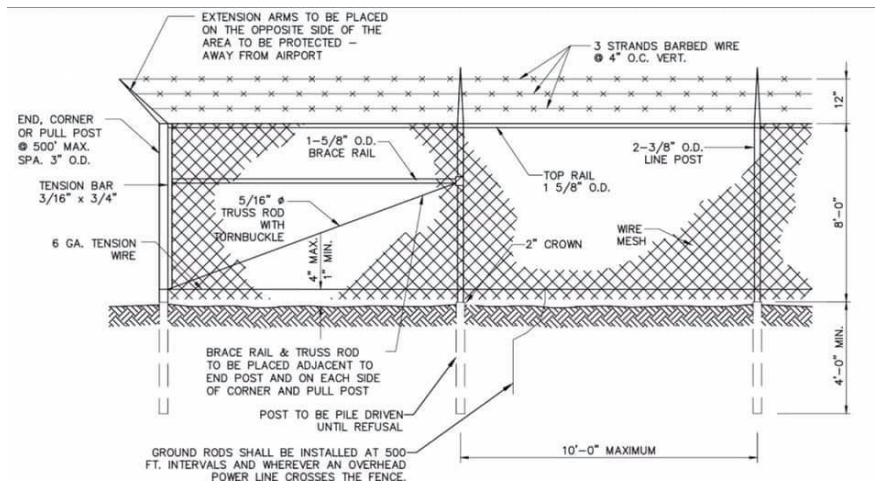
Triangle Off-Road Cyclists
Dave Anderson, Board Member
advocacy@torc-nc.org

The Umstead Coalition
Dr. Jean Spooner, Chair
umsteadcoalition@gmail.com

Summary: Instead of the controversial proposed fence project, we propose the **RDU Forest/Umstead Trail Center** as a solution for RDU AA concerns.

Proposed RDU Fence Project

RDU AA has proposed fencing along the border of Umstead State Park and the Old Reedy Creek (ORC) greenway corridor. The fence aims to solve illegal trespass and liability issues. But the 30' wide clear cutting, 9' tall chain-link barbed wire fencing, and fence patrols on ATVs would greatly harm Umstead State Park and the natural beauty of the area.



Plans call for an 8' tall chain link fence topped with 1' of barbed wire

Source: RDU AA Fence Bid Document



The fence will surround forested buffer lands. Along the fence (and all along the park border) a 30' wide path will be clear cut for ATV's to patrol the fence.

Source: Overlay graphics from RDU AA Fence Bid Document

The proposed fencing has caused much concern from the broader community. This video helps illustrate the dramatic impact it would have on the park and greenway corridor.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bat3Fk-1Rjs>

An Alternate Solution: The Trail Center

We propose an alternate solution. Instead of a fence, let's create a trail center which would benefit all parties more than a border fence. The trail center preserves the natural beauty of this recreational district, preserves the wildlife and ecological corridor, saves RDU AA money and staff time, and provides much needed forested recreation along a central and well-connected greenway hub.

The unsanctioned trails on RDU AA managed land are a problem that needs to be addressed. As the TORC mission includes establishing and maintaining **legal** mountain bike trails, TORC does not condone the unsanctioned trails and has no involvement in the creation or maintenance of them. However, TORC welcomes the opportunity to help solve the trespassing and liability issue. Under the current situation TORC cannot help because we do not hold activities or work days on unsanctioned trails. But if the trails became sanctioned, TORC and Wake County Parks can solve both the trespass and liability concerns as has been done at Lake Crabtree County Park. TORC is a volunteer organization, and our trail work would come at no cost to the airport.

Addressing RDU AA Concerns

Let's examine how a trail center can solve the concerns driving the need for the fence:

- Trespassing - with an agreement in place, we can contain activity to within predetermined boundaries. Whereas under the current situation, we (TORC) have no ability to limit activity or

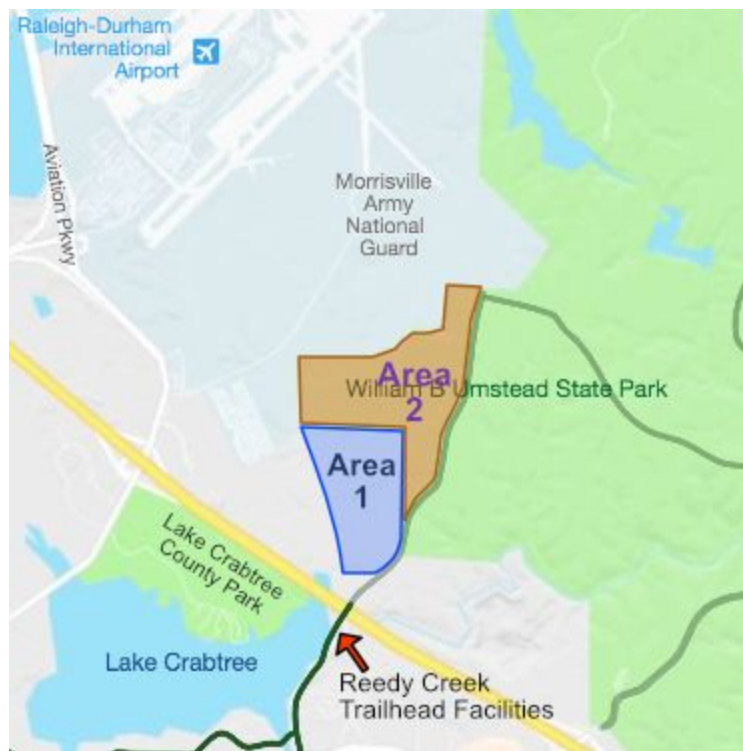
boundaries. If RDU AA would like, TORC can further assist by obfuscating already existing “out of bounds” trails to discourage use. While TORC is not an enforcement organization, we believe by both obfuscating trails and opening up sanctioned trails on part of this land we can sufficiently discourage “out of bounds” use.

- Liability - Wake County leases the land, and TORC maintains an MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) with the county for trail maintenance responsibilities. This is the model used at other area trail systems including Lake Crabtree Park and Harris Lake Park, and shifts the burden of liability away from RDU AA.

This forested buffer area can become a recreational asset instead of an expense (fence cost), staff distraction, and liability. If RDU AA desired, a new connector trail could also be constructed, creating an attractive amenity for the RDU lease parcels along the National Guard Drive / Aviation Parkway corridor.

The Trail Center Solution

While TORC does not condone the current 286 trails, we recognize they demonstrate a need for more trails in this central location. The Lake Crabtree trails are heavily utilized and Wake County Parks desires to use this property to expand that trail network (as demonstrated by the Wake County proposal submitted to RDU AA in 2017 to manage trails on 151 acres of Area 1). Likewise, NC State Parks recognize the need for mountain bike trails within Umstead State Park.



As partners, we collectively propose a trail center:

- Area 1 - 151 acres - RDU property leased to Wake County
- Area 2 - 235 acres - Umstead State Park property

- Trails in both Area 1 and 2 to be managed by Wake County Parks (benefiting NC State Parks as this area is less accessible to Umstead State Park staff). Wake County and NC State Parks would collaborate and approve trail planning, construction, and maintenance of trails within Umstead State Park.
- Trails maintained by TORC under MOU with Wake County.
- Facilities - existing restrooms and parking areas are available at both Lake Crabtree Park and the new Town of Cary Reedy Creek Trailhead.

This corridor is a nexus of outdoor recreation. The already existing greenway connectivity, trailhead facilities, and central location align well with the proposed trail center.

Why now?

Now is the time to address this issue, before the fence plans move forward. The proposed fence will cost \$2.5 million to build plus commit RDU AA to ongoing maintenance costs and staff time to patrol. The proposed fence would separate areas 1 and 2, severely diminishing the ability to create a trail network that spans both areas. The 30' wide clear cutting, 9' tall chain-link barbed wire fencing, and planned fence patrols on ATVs would harm the natural beauty of the area.

With both Wake County Parks and NC State Parks moving forward together, we create a better end solution. Much more so than area 1 or 2 could alone, the combined areas make for a distinctive trail center. They total 386 acres, 180' of elevation change, and contain numerous ravines and streams.

The Quarry and Wake Stone Mineral Lease

We only support this trail center proposal if it is ***not dependent*** on funding from the RDU / Wake Stone mineral lease agreement of March 2019. This agreement unnecessarily suggested a possible funding source for new trails. However, we believe any trail project should proceed on its own merits, independent of the quarry lease.

About TORC

Triangle Off-Road Cyclists (TORC www.torc-nc.org) is a volunteer organization dedicated to ensuring the future of mountain biking in the Triangle area of North Carolina through the promotion of responsible riding, establishment and maintenance of mountain biking trails, and preservation of North Carolina's natural resources. TORC extends a warm welcome to everybody who is interested in mountain biking. We offer group rides, clinics and events to accommodate people with different skill levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. In cooperation with our partners and land managers, TORC members help maintain some of the premier trails in the Triangle area and join together in advocating for new trails.