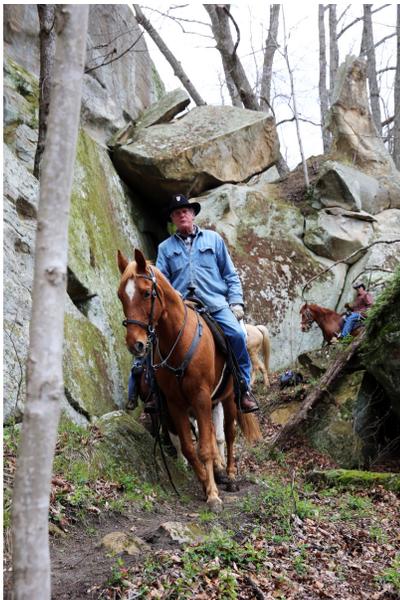


Dispatch-Herald.com

Huntington, West Virginia

Balancing Rock trail dedicated in Wayne National Forest

- By DAVID E. MALLOY Apr 11, 2016



HANGING ROCK, Ohio - Joshua McKenzie moved to the Ohio 93 area near Lake Vesuvius in 2000 and started hiking in the Wayne National Forest 10 years later looking for an area called Balancing Rock.

Old postcards dated in 1898, 1901 and 1914 showed the siltstone rocks in an area called Paradise Park. After a strenuous hike, McKenzie finally found it.

"The (Balancing Rock Trail) was worthwhile to bring to everyone's attention," McKenzie said after the trail was dedicated Friday morning near the Lake Vesuvius spillway.

With the help of dozens of people who volunteered

hundreds of hours, the combination horse and hiking trail is open year round to hikers and from April 15 through Dec. 15 to horseback riding.

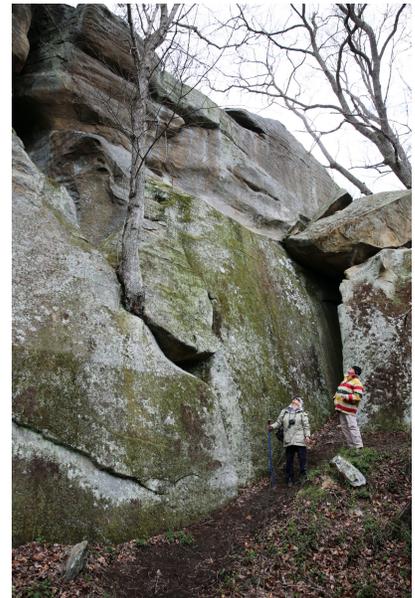
"I think it'll be a popular hiking trail," said Tim Sloan, Ironton district ranger at the Wayne National Forest. The loop trail is 0.6 of a mile while the larger section of the trail is 4.3 miles, Sloan said.

"I'm really proud of what we're doing here today," said Tony Scardina, forest supervisor at the Wayne National Forest. "This is the third of nine projects planned to improve the trail system in the Ironton Ranger District. We're creating safe, scenic and sustainable trails."

Forest officials gave U.S. Dept. of Agriculture certificates of appreciation to the Lawrence County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council, the Elkins Creek Horse Club and to the Ohio University Southern equine studies program for their help in opening the trail.

"This is a truly great partnership," said Bill Dingus, executive director of the Greater Lawrence County Area Chamber of Commerce who served as master of ceremonies at the trail dedication.

"We're so lucky to have this in Lawrence County," said Julie Stephens, field representative for U.S.



Rep. Bill Johnson.

"This is a great thing," said Lawrence County Commissioner Les Boggs. The forest "really does belong to the public. It's a great resource. We can use it to bring more people into our county. It will have an economic impact."

Volunteers started working on the project in 2011 with Forest Service personnel. Several dozen volunteers donated more than 860 hours on the project. Now the public will have access to the balancing and pedestal rocks, which are sedimentary rocks called siltstone.

Brochures about the Balancing Rock Trail are available at the Ironton Ranger District office on Ohio 93 about seven miles north of Ironton.

ATVs aren't permitted on the trail.