“Repairing Trails with Severe Ruts in Remote Locations” Video Script

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Welcome back to the outdoor office of Cedar Oak Farm and the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation Inc. (QUWF). Our 200 acres is totally managed for wildlife and outdoor enjoyment. I’m Craig, and we are part of a 2000 acre landowner coop here joining many landowners with like goals to enhance all upland wildlife and the habitat they need to prosper in the Ozark Highlands of Missouri. That includes deer, turkey, quail, squirrels, rabbits, owls, eagles and many varieties of song birds.

As part of our trail planning series, today we are going to be looking at repairing severe ruts on existing remote trails, a must for total remote access and egress on the farm or homestead. We will show you how we handle the problems, these are suggestions or ideas for you to consider as everyone’s piece of God’s earth is different. ***Remember, having good access and egress roads on very rural or off grid properties can add as much as 15% to the value of the land.*** Further, we watch many off grid or remote projects where the access receives the least amount of focus. We highly suggest that good access should be the first project undertaken after border signage is up. It saves equipment time, makes supplying the sites, border fencing, security or trails easier and most important, if there is a medical emergency, access is ready. This should be an important part of your initial budgeting process and yearly maintenance cost. Do it right the first time.

Heavy tractor and RTV traffic during all the rain we had this spring caused very large, deep muddy ruts, so today we are taking care of that issue. The aggregate or limestone we are hauling to the ruts are of two sizes. First the 2-inch rock to fill the majority of the large rut, then a mix of 2-inch and mixed fine limestone for the final surface treatment. This gives a smoother, packed surface that tends to hold very well.

This particular section of trail has one track 18 to 24 inches lower/deeper than the other and it is about 15 feet long. This was caused by constant travel with the tractor with loader and backhoe fixing the remote culverts after a flash flood in the spring. There are many options to fill in the large depression, gravel, river run gravel or aggregate such as 2-inch limestone stone and a combination of 2-inch and fine limestone, that we brought in. We do not recommend using surface soil, pieces of limbs or logs, or large stones or rocks etc. they are too soft a base to hold the trail together. Limbs or larger stones will move around or flip up which can cause damage to equipment or damage low hydraulic lines or worse. The 2-inch stone binds in the ruts, holds and compacts for good equipment travel.

Further, because we are in the whitetail rut, we will be showing why access trails are so important for rubs and scrapes. Though the buck seldom walks the roads, he comes in at angles, facing the wind, smelling all the way. The does do follow trails and he will leave the rubs and scrapes just off the road. He travels off the

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roads, 20 to 30 yards or more but comes to check his “area markings” regularly during the rut. There may be a shot or two of bucks crossing our main access lane later in the video.

During rainy seasons, we also use a light surface treatment of cedar chips which mixes with the shallow surface mud and makes a good base during wet conditions, though today we will not be using chips or the **Woodmaxx 8600 chipper** to make the chips.

We really appreciate you liking, subscribing and sharing this video and remember, the content and equipment references for this video will be on the www.QUWF.net website as a FREE PDF download.

We show equipment, tools and accessories we bought and use trying to find the best options for landowners, farmers and homesteaders. We will show the breakage if that happens and repairs. Being a veteran founded organization we do look for American made equipment, parts and supplies.

Let’s get started.

We use the Kubota sidekick RTV we named Tiger, hooked to a Woodland Mills Dump Multilander off road trailer. The dual axle trailer, equipped with high floatation tires, can haul up to 2,000 pounds but we stay shy of that so as to not overload the J type axles. You really have to be careful backing a fully loaded trailer up into the soft aggregate, the Sidekick has enough power to literally bend the axles if you put too much power to it. Yes, we did grease all axles to spec on the trailer and hitch.

Why the Sidekick and Multilander versus the tractor and bucket? We can haul more aggregate at one time, 1.5 tractor buckets and much faster. Going down to the work area we limit the Sidekicks speed to 9 MPH on Tiger, versus a tractor doing 3 to 4 mph. On the return trip being empty, we go 15 to 18 mph so it is a much faster combination. We do use the tractor on one slope area where it is very difficult to hold the RTV Sidekick and fully loaded trailer to dump, it creeps downhill. The RTV brakes will not hold the full load to dump.

We load the Multilander carefully making sure we do not come in contact with any portion of the trailer. Soft, slow pressure technique on the tractor hydraulics. Using the bucket leverage and loader lift helps obtain a full bucket every time without a lot of tire spin. Starting with a ground level condition of the bucket using the visual sight control normally located on the right loader arm, we load about 1.5 buckets into the trailer to stay shy of the 2,000 pound max load.

NOTE Here: Make sure the gravel or aggregate is dry, it is much heavier if wet and you can easily overload the trailer. Wait until all is dry to work the ground and the aggregate.

Dumping the load is a rather fast operation, cranking the Multilander to an unload angle then pulling ahead slowly to let all the aggregate slide out of the trailer. We do carry a rake and shovel just in case we have wet material and it sticks a little and to level out the load itself. If we had the tractor closer, we would back drag to level but it is about a mile back to the farm and we will do the final backgrade later.

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The bed will lower by itself and I just need to put the pin back in the bed to hold it in the down position. Note how I had no head doing this, still learning all camera placement skills.

I showed the dry flash creek crossing and explained the damage the early flash flood had done. I placed huge boulders in the creek bank corner where it turned to prevent another overflow onto the trails.

The importance of border signage was mention to ensure your land boundaries are well marked, do this first, especially at any areas of possible access/trespass like old gates. Keep the signs closer together at those points. We use VOSS signs both for border signs and trail markers.

As we drove back and forth, slowly through the wooded areas, we spotted many fresh rubs with no real scrapes yet. The video shows two rubs, they look like smaller bucks of the 2-to-3-year range but good potential none the less.

I pointed out the Honey Locust thorns that have cost me many trips to the AG tire store. Get rid of them, find the mother tree, use chemicals to kill it and all the sprouts growing off the tree's root system. We use a basal spray from ground up 18 inches all around the trunk. Check with your local AG Chemical supplier for their recommendation and mix. For smaller Honey Locust trees we apply Tordon RTU on the stumps to kill the roots and off shoots.

The end result, we have a stable section of trail, level and well compacted with the 2-inch stone and the 2-inch mix on the surface. It took 6-loads with the Multilander trailer, which is about 10,000 pounds of aggregate. This trail is a main east side access and exit route for the border fencing and security so it requires good maintenance and I like to do things right the first time so I never have to deal with it again.

Less than .05%, yes less than 1% of the population actively performs wildlife habitat work across the U.S. We are losing farms and ranches at an alarming rate. PLEASE get involved to save and preserve our outdoor hunting heritage. Join us, on line membership is easy!! We work on habitat for all upland species.

Yours in Conservation

Craig A. Alderman, Founder

The Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, Inc. www.quwf.net
P.O. Box 947, Buffalo, MO 65622
A 501C3 Not for Profit, National Conservation Organization
The only national conservation organization founded and managed by a veteran

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Key References:

Milwaukee 18V Staple Gun: Home Depot is a source.

1.25-inch staples: Home Depot is a source, VOSS Sign for trail markers and border signs.

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