

## Forest Care Reminder

Bob Geyer

My dog, Tigger, and I were in Bent Creek the other day. Tigger knows the area there like the back of his nose, but the other day even he noticed a few new trails. He gave me his worried look, and I knew exactly what he meant. His typing isn't so good, so I'll relay his message.

Bent Creek is primarily a "research and demonstration" forest. We mountain bikers, hikers, equestrians, paint ball warriors, hunters and fishermen all have access to this area only so long as the Research Station chooses to let us. If the researchers decide that we're a liability to their work, we will lose access to probably the best mountain biking area in the South. Tigger and I don't want to see that happen, and I'll bet you don't either.

So have a care. More mountain bikers use Bent

Creek than any other user group, so by sheer numbers we have a greater impact than any other group. Many Bent Creek users do not know what's a legitimate trail and what isn't, and everyone's always looking for new places to explore. If you walk into the woods to take a leek, within a week your path may be a new trail. If this pattern continues, we are sure to lose this most precious resource.

The established trails are pretty obvious. Some of them are not "system trails," meaning that they are not official, but what Tigger and I are asking is that you stick to the established trails. Don't create new ones and don't use those new trails that keep springing up. Please. It's in all our interest!

Tigger, like the rest of the guys down at Pooh Corner,

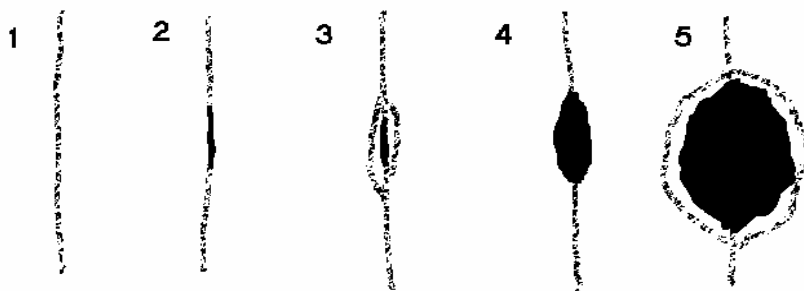
thinks in verse. He asked me to introduce his new trail maxim:

Protect the forest sheen  
Keep the trail width lean  
Stay off the green!

If nobody walked or rode on anything green, trail widths would not expand, new trails would not appear and vegetation would not die under foot or tire. In a less-populated spot it would not be such an issue, but with the number of people riding in Bent Creek, the actions of each one of us are greatly magnified.

If you want to explore little-used trails, please go somewhere where the trails are little used. Bent Creek is a lot of things, but 'little used' just ain't one of them.

## Birth of a doughnut



- 1: trail
- 2: mud in trail
- 3: riding around mud
- 4: mud expands
- 5: process continues