

Changes reduce impacts at Bent Creek

Recreation is now managed in different ways at the Bent Creek Experimental Forest: 47 miles of trails are designated for equestrians or mountain bikers; non-designated trails are closed to these users; and overnight camping is prohibited.

In 1927, the U.S. Forest Service chief designated Bent Creek Demonstration Forest as a research and demonstration Forest. Research continues to be the main mission at the forest, which is located on the Pisgah Ranger District of Pisgah National Forest.

To ensure compatibility between the forest's primary research mission and other non-research uses and reduce resource damage, the Forest Service introduced new limits on recreation use.

Many user-created non-designated trails are closed to reduce soil erosion and prevent damage to Bent Creek Experimental Forest research plots. This should ensure that future research sites are not compromised, according to a U.S. Forest Service decision notice.

Issued by Forest Supervisor John Ramey and Southern Research Director Peter Roussopoulos, the decision notice focuses on managing visitor use in the Bent Creek Experimental Forest. This management direction does not affect trails within the North Carolina Arboretum.

In the new designated trail system, 17.8 miles of trails are open for horseback riders and 23 miles for mountain bikers. All trails are available to hikers. Seventeen more miles of gated roads are open for equestrian riders, bikers, and hikers. Designated



PHOTO BY MARY NOEL

This father-and-son duo travel the mountain bike trails in Bent Creek Demonstration Forest.

trails are being marked in early 2003. To ensure public safety during hunting season, hunting and safety information will be posted on bulletin boards.

In the future, Bent Creek trail users will notice more parking opportunities. One new parking lot will be created, one enlarged, and two former campsites will be converted to parking lots along

Forest Service Road 479 near Rice Pinnacle, Boyd Branch, South Ridge, and Long Branch roads. This space will add about 30 new parking spaces. "Closing Bent Creek to overnight camping (outside Lake Powhatan Campground), will substantially decrease erosion occurring at the current designated roadside campsites," notes the decision notice. "The camping closure should also help to reduce litter."

SPECIAL DAY-USE AREAS



Fees Subject to Change

Operated by private concessionaire

MAP NUMBER
RESTROOMS
PICNIC AREA
WATER

TRAILS
OTHER ACTIVITIES
FEE (\$)



PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST								COMMENTS
CAROLINA HEMLOCK ♦ From BURNSVILLE, take U.S. 19-E for 5 miles. Turn right on NC 80 for 9 miles.	56	F	⚙️	🗑️	🚶	🐎	🏠	\$3/car picnic shelter by reservation April 10-Nov. 1. On the South Toe River. Popular swimming hole for tubers. For picnic shelter reservations, call 877-457-4023.
COLD SPRING From I-40, west of Canton, take Harmon Den exit. Travel northeast on FR 148 for 3.7 miles	44	V	⚙️	🗑️	🚶	🐎	🏠	no fee Open all year. Pretty picnic spot in the heart of Harmon Den. Fish in Cold Spring Creek. Appalachian/French Broad Station: 828-622-3202.
CRADLE OF FORESTRY IN AMERICA From BREVARD, take U.S. 64-E to U.S. 276, turn left. Follow U.S. 276 for 11 miles.	39	F ♿️	⚙️	🗑️	🚶 ♿️	🐎	?	adults \$5; 4-17 year olds \$2.50; 3 & under, free April 15-Nov. 5. Forest Discovery Center has exhibits & movie. Explore two 1-mile trails. Pink Beds Picnic Area next door. Pisgah District: 828-877-3130.
ELK FALLS From ELK PARK on NC 194, take FR 190 for about 6 miles.	59		⚙️		🚶	🐎	🏠	no fee Open all year. Short trail leads to a picturesque 50-foot waterfall. Appalachian/Toecane Station: 828-682-6146.
LAKE POWHATAN ♦ From ASHEVILLE, take I-26E to exit 2, NC 191, go south for 4 miles, turn right on FR 806, go 3.5 miles.	43	F	⚙️	🗑️	🚶	🐎	🏠 ♿️	\$5/car for day use; \$20 season pass April 1-Nov. 1. Swimming beach with lifeguards in summer. Accessible fishing pier. Pass is also good for North Mills River. Pisgah District: 828-877-3350.
MAX PATCH From HOT SPRINGS, take NC 209S about 7.3 miles to SR 1175. Go south on SR 1175 for 5.3 miles to SR 1181. Take SR 1181 about 3.5 miles to end. Turn right on SR 1182 for 1.5 miles.					🚶 🐎		🏠	no fee Open all year. Walk two loop trails (1.4 & 2.4 miles) to the grassy summit where you get a panoramic view. Crossed by Appalachian Trail. Stocked fishing pond. Appalachian/French Broad Station: 828-622-3202.
MURRAY BRANCH From HOT SPRINGS, take 25/70-W across bridge, turn left, then right on SR 1304 (gravel) for 4 miles.	48		⚙️		🚶		🏠	no fee Open all year: Picnic, fish along French Broad River. Walk the short River Ridge loop trail. Picnic shelter. Appalachian/French Broad Station: 828-622-3202.
NORTH MILLS RIVER ♦ From ASHEVILLE, take I-26E to exit 2, NC 191, go south for 13.3 miles, turn right on SR 1345, go 5 miles.	41	F	⚙️	🗑️	🚶	🐎	🏠	\$3/car for day use; \$20 season pass April 1-Nov. 1. Many miles of trails nearby, open to hikers, bikers, horses. Pass is also good for Lake Powhatan. Pisgah District: 828-877-3350.
ROAN MOUNTAIN From BAKERSVILLE, take NC 261-N for 13 miles.	58	F	⚙️	🗑️	🚶 ♿️		🏠 ?	\$3/car \$15/season May -Sept. Renowned for rhododendron gardens, grassy balds. Short trails and the Appalachian Trail. Appalachian/Toecane Station: 828-682-6146.
ROCKY BLUFF From HOT SPRINGS, take NC 209-S for 3.3 miles.	46	F	⚙️	🗑️	🚶		🏠	no fee May 1-Oct. 31. Walk the 1.2-mile Spring Creek Loop Trail that leads to Spring Creek, a trout fishing creek. Appalachian/French Broad Station: 828-622-3202.
SLIDING ROCK From BREVARD, take U.S. 64E to U.S. 276. Turn left & follow U.S. 276 for 8 miles.	37	F ♿️		🗑️			🏠	\$1/person 6 & under, free Open all year for viewing. Restrooms open Memorial Day-Labor Day. No alcohol or picnicking. Lifeguards on duty in season. Pisgah District: 828-877-3350.
TABLE ROCK From MORGANTON, take NC 181-N. Turn left at sign onto Gingercake Acres Road (SR 1264), which becomes FR 210 (gravel). Turn right on FR 99.	62	V ♿️	⚙️		🚶 ♿️		🏠	no fee April 1-Dec. 31. Short trails travel the rim of Linville Gorge to the summit of Table Rock and to the Chimneys. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.
WISEMANS VIEW From town of LINVILLE FALLS, turn right on NC 183 for 1 mile to SR 1238, Kistler Memorial Highway (gravel).	61	V ♿️			🚶 ♿️		🏠	no fee Open all year. Spectacular view of Linville Gorge. Drive slowly on rough gravel road. Grandfather District: 828-652-2144.