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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to support the Tillman Trails connectivity project.

I love visiting George Washington NF. I work from home on my computer and by the end of the week I'm ready to get outside and take a break from technology. Sometimes I'm even counting down the clock on the workday to get out for an evening bike ride on Narrowback and the improved tillman west trail. Or I'll do a more ambitious loop up Lynn and down Wolf. I'll meet friends on the weekend and go camping. We'll go for a ride and then cool off in North River.

It's hard to explain how much GWNF and the trails there mean to me. After a ride my mind is quiet and calm and my body is relaxed and tired. I don't know of a better way to maintain physical and mental health. Biking in GWNF hasn't just strengthened me physically, it has strengthened my connection with friends. Nothing is quite the same as sharing a long day on the trail. Seeing the mountain laurel in full bloom in the spring, finding a nice berry patch in the summer, and watching the leaves turn in the fall are just a few of the joys I've shared with friends. I love GWNF and the trails there, and they have had a huge positive impact on my life.

Unfortunately, a few of the trails are too steep and rocky and get washed out easily. This makes them difficult to ride, hike, and run. The trails that have been rerouted don't get washed out as much (since they are better designed) and are graded so they are much more enjoyable and accessible. As a result they have become the most popular trails. Many of the existing trails provide challenge for advanced riders. Narrowback, on the other hand, is one of the few areas that has trails appropriate for beginner bikers and is fun for advanced riders too. Connecting that loop with the parking lot would provide more options for beginner riders and a safer way by avoiding the road.

I'd like to see more trails rerouted. I'd also like to see new trails added, especially in the Tillman area. GWNF is an amazing place for recreation and has much more potential. Connecting existing trails with new ones allows more options for loops and could be safer than riding roads. New trails, especially ones close to the GWNF border, could provide visitors with more options for recreation without having to make a long drive. The Tillman area is perfect for more trail construction.