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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I recently became aware that the over mountain shelter is being torn down. I could list a plethora of reasons the barn should stay up, mostly extra space for a growing through hiking crowd, but also for the preservation of one of the most beautiful camp sites in the area. Aside from extra space at a high elevation with little wind or weather cover, the barn also has one of the only privys around, where as the Clyde smith shelter can barely hold 6 people and no privy means more wear on the land. With the growing popularity of the AT, the Clyde smith shelter starts getting crowded in February now, leaving more and more hikers needing to camp around the shelters or in spots along the trail. Renovating and reopening the barn could help with the growing congestion and limit human impact to the currently established places. The new rule about shelters being two miles from a road is violated in NC,GA,and PA of the top of my head, but this shelter lies far up a forest Service road and a gate could easily be placed at the head of this road to prevent anyone from driving to the barn. I understand the barn is becoming run down, but the funds to renovate that iconic shelter could easily be raised by the hiking community if the forest service is unwilling to pay for the renovation. It's usually Boy Scouts and trail maintenance clubs that have to do the actual labor, and many hikers including myself are locals with building experience and tools we can lend. I personally could bring out a generator, nail guns, screw guns, saws, and likely all the tools needed to build a new barn and complete the job using power tools in a reasonable time span. The amount of local people who cherish this location is not lacking, and volunteers can easily be found. Just for an example, if the atc put a notice on their website that they needed donations and volunteers to rebuild that specific shelter, the hiking community would spread that information like wildfire across the internet and the funds would be raised. As far as manpower, if I new this barn was being rebuilt and hands were needed, as a local I'd be there every weekend with all my tools. I'd rebuild this barn myself with my own money if I was allowed to drive up there and start working. The spread of information is much easier nowadays and I feel confident that if the atc put a volunteer notice up for upper east TN, they'd have more people than work. That barn means a lot to the local people and we will do all we can to preserve and rebuild it for future generations. Please reconsider opening up donations to rebuild and allowing volunteers to sign up to help. If money is the deciding factor, I'm certain the atc knows how quickly the hiking community could raise the funds rebuild. And if the money from donations seems uncertain, I'd like to remind the atc that many people who film their hikes as a vlog receive a plethora of donations from the hiking community just to continue their hike. If hikers are willing to shell out thousands every year just so someone can walk the trail, you can be certain beyond and shadow of a doubt that the community would pay to rebuild this barn. Please contact me if you need volunteers or help raising money for renovation, the locals are very passionate about maintaining the trail and with 100% certainty could pay for and rebuild that barn on our own if we were just allowed to start.