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Comments: Comments from Backcountry Horseman of the Pisgah on the NFC Lickstone Ridge Project

The Backcountry Horseman of the Pisgah (BCHP) thank you and welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the Lickstone Ridge project.

Today the Lickstone Ridge forest service roads and trails provide beautiful opportunities for hikers, riders, and mountain bikers to enjoy the scenery of the Southern Appalachians. We are excited about the plans to improve the Lickstone Ridge area of the Pisgah Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest, particularly the plans to improve most of the roads, convert some of the roads to trails, create better access, and build more parking.

We strongly recommend the following as part of the Lickstone Ridge Project.

1. Expand the parking area for all users and include enough room for at least 6 horse trailers at multiple access points. Provide sufficient clearance for horse trailer turn-arounds and passing places on narrow roads for two trucks with dual rear wheels and trailers to pass.
2. Convert decommissioned roads into multi-use trails for hikers and horses and where safe mountain bikers. For downhill sections where possible, create separate downhill trail segments: one segment for horses and hikers and one segment for mountain bikers. If necessary, consider day of the week restrictions where necessary to separate horses from mountain bikers (see for example Tsali NF trails).
3. Develop loop trail opportunities for hikers, horses, and mountain bikers.
4. Extend the dates the gate is open on FS #97. For those periods when FS#97 is closed, develop adequate parking near the closed gate.

The Backcountry Horseman of the Pisgah with our trained sawyers and other volunteers are key partners in working with the Pisgah Ranger District in maintaining the National Forest. We hope to recruit the equestrians who currently use the trails in Lickstone Ridge to become members of Backcountry Horseman of the Pisgah. We then look forward to working with the NFS staff on the plans for Lickstone Ridge, the implementation of plans, and then the long-term sustainability of the trails. Partnering together can benefit both the NFS and BCHP.