

PISGAH LEDGE RECREATION PROPOSAL

This proposal is fully endorsed by the following:

David Whitmire – FWCC/ Headwaters Outfitters, Jim Gray – RGS, Gordon Warburton- QDMA, Gary Peters – NC Chapter NWTf

Various Components of this proposal are supported by the following:

Kevin Colburn- AWA, Julie White – SORBA, Deirdre Lightsey – BCHA, Zachary Lesch- Hue – Access Fund

The intent of this proposal is to recognize the local and regional importance of the Pisgah Ledge Ga as a whole as a major recreation designation, while at the same time valuing its historic and current importance in forest and wildlife conservation. With the increased visitation over the last 30 years it is evident that although the Hwy. 276 corridor sees the most visitors, both the east and west boundaries also have witnessed historic high visitation. For these reasons I feel it is important not to just put an emphasis on the 276 corridor but be clear on the descriptions for the entire Ga in order to not only to meet the corridor needs but to encourage recreation growth and resources over the whole Ga so we don't lose the recreation experiences due to over use or resource degradation.

This proposal is to supplement the Pisgah Ledge Geographic Area and Management areas, updated May, 19, 2017 by the USFS.

1. Support road infrastructure and parking, that includes scenic byways, that allows adequate access to trail heads, camp sites, picnic areas and other heavily visited sites. (Waterfalls, wildlife viewing, climbing, hunting, fishing, paddling, etc.)
2. Support and maintain the existing trails that meet the FS standards, and work to bring trails not in compliance up to standards. Continue the use of volunteer partners to achieve trail goals and expanding Forest Service capacity.
3. Recognize the diverse recreation usage and support has many multi-use trails and areas as possible, knowing that some trails and areas will also need to be managed for specific uses for safety and environmental concerns.
4. Recognizes that both forestry and wildlife conservation practices not only can be compatible with recreation and has been, but we can also strive to change policies that will allow for revenue from these practices on Pisgah Ledge remain on this Ga to further benefit recreation and other Pisgah Ledge resource needs.
5. Support the day lighting (50- 100 ft from side of roads) and maintenance of gated fs roads. These roads are used for many forms of recreation. They are also important features for forest infrastructure including, fire breaks, wildlife habitat and forestry work.
6. Recognize that some user groups need site specific, facilities and access. (Horse trailer parking and camps, handicap persons, large groups.etc.) Work with fs and user groups to identify these areas and needs.

7. Support a public education media within the Ga. that educates the public on forest and wildlife management, being a responsible user and other forest concerns. (Invasive plants, trash, safety, hunting seasons, bears, etc.)

EMERGENCY ACTIONS

A plan of action to address the dead hemlocks and the dangers associated with the amount of dead trees and limbs that are present in the 276 corridor and the amount people vulnerable to them.

A plan of action that addresses the over use of stream side / road side camping and the effects on water quality from human waste and improper trash disposal.

SUPPORT OF OTHER PROPOSALS.

Projects involving active management along trail corridors should be designed to have minimal impact on the trails and their special characteristics. Trail users should be involved early in the development of such projects to provide input concerning such things as acceptable temporary disturbance to trail users, opportunities to educate the public through signage, and opportunities to improve the trail experience while achieving project objectives, i.e. providing opportunities for wildlife and scenic views and improving condition of the trail.

Julie

Access Fund GA Recommendations
August 9, 2017

Pisgah Ledge Geographic Area

Similar to the Eastern Escarpment, the Pisgah Ledge Geographic Area is an especially significant region to the climbing community. It offers a large number and high concentration of climbing sites and experiences, from remote, backcountry rock and ice climbing opportunities, to multi-day aid climbs to a variety of bouldering sites. These climbing areas are an essential part of the local region's outdoor recreation and education industries; many summer camps, colleges, guides and other outdoor programs utilize multiple different climbing sites in the area to give their participants and clients transformative climbing experiences. Local climbers from Asheville, Brevard, Hendersonville and other surrounding communities utilize these areas year-round, in addition to visitors from nearby states like South Carolina and Georgia. Areas like Looking Glass are nationally known and attract visitors from further afield.

We recognize and appreciate the acknowledgement of rock climbing in this section, however we

recommend additions and changes and overall greater emphasis on climbing to better account for the climbing significance of this GA, and need for climbing related stewardship.

Description of area

Add language and a new sentence that describes trails, trail use and climbing:

The region is defined by mountain peaks and cliff faces that give way to narrow valleys with striking rivers and waterfalls. The mountainous landscape provides many ideal opportunities for hiking, biking, camping and climbing.

Goals: Enhancing and restoring resiliency

Edit to d), consistent with suggested edit recommended for Linville Gorge above

Continue to support conservation and protection of peregrine falcons through monitoring, seasonal closure orders on rock faces, and collaboration with the climbing and recreation community.

Add new goal related to the need to address erosion and mitigate impacts to recreational resources that are not part of the Forest's designated sites or trails.

Maintain and restore access and sustainability for recreational resources that are not serviced by designated transportation systems or trail networks through activities such as erosion control and education.

Goals: Connecting people to the land

Add new goal to emphasize recreational management focus:

Maintain and enhance mountain biking, climbing, paddling, hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and sustainable recreational resources and experiences.

Goals: Opportunities to partner with others

Remove and replace b) to be consistent with similar need in Eastern Escarpment

(d) Work with recreation groups to maintain the integrity and resiliency of rare plant communities through site specific management, stewardship and education.

