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Pisgah Ranger District

Hello,

I am writing about changing what is allowed in the Pisgah National Forest Ranger District. This weekend I set out to hike a small portion of the Art Loeb Trail near the Shining Rock Wilderness. This is something I've done time and time again. This weekend though I was highly disturbed by what I saw and what I found out is actually allowed.

Where the Art Loeb Trail and Investor Gap trail meet where the actual sign stating you're about to enter the Shining Rock Wilderness is, there was a large pickup truck with a big canopy and a full sized BBQ grill parked there. A child's bike was laying across the trail and a large (what I assume) family had camped there overnight. This was not the view I thought I would be seeing at a very beautiful campsite that I have been at many times.

This is a sight for sore eyes as well as a resource devastation. Allowing these vehicles to park over vegetation and bring all their toys from home is killing the surrounding grass and plants. Not just that, but it allows them to bring in more litter. I was very sad to see that someone had chopped up two giant logs that were used as a sitting area around the fire ring that had been there, but was also dismantled by someone. Having a BBQ grill there is also a huge disaster as it will train bears to know that area brings food. That can cause a major problem for backpackers who don't have the protection of a car.

I propose that the gate allowing 4WD vehicles to enter this area be closed year round. There are plenty of other areas for car camping, but this should not be one of them.

Thank you.

- Kelly Thomas