

Date submitted (Eastern Standard Time): 9/2/2020 8:56:11 PM

First name: Chris

Last name: Shenandoah Mountain Touring, LLC

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

RE: Tillman Trails Connectivity Project #58134

Thank you so much for allowing me to comment on this Forest improvement project.

I applaud your continued collaborative efforts with the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC). This long lasting partnership has yielded over a half million dollars of direct investment in Forest rehabilitation by the SVBC. It was a great learning process for this all volunteer group to apply for the grants, put the projects out to bid, manage the construction, and manage the grant from start to finish.

Phase 1	2010 - \$98,000
Phase 2	2013 - \$250,000
Phase 3	2015 - \$100,000
Phase 3 Addition	2017 - \$100,000

During a meeting in 2015 with Forest Supervisor Tom Speaks, the SVBC was encouraged to put the finishing touches on their 20 year trail plan and to continue to make a difference. Mr. Speaks stated, "your leadership in this region has made this the hot spot for bicycling in all the GW / Jeff and we want to see this focus continue here and your efforts to thrive."

After Mr. Speaks retired the pipeline pulled most all of the resources of the Forest and most of the recreation projects stalled out. SVBC took this time to invest in their leadership creating a full time staff knowing that the only way to move a project forward was to be able to take all the burden off the Forest.

This new project is super exciting because it is the first of its kind on this Forest where SVBC has taken the lead on planning with the coordination of the NEPA (environmental review) putting the project out to bid, managing the construction and again, the grant itself.

SVBC has long been seeking a model trail system for bicycling like the Shenandoah National Park has for hiking just across the Valley. Robust connections, varied terrain, great signage and scenic views. This is a great next step in making those connections on front country trails to get trail users off the roads by making smart connections that benefit all users.

This project is one step in the Tillman Rd. / Narrowback plan that also provides a greenway style trail that parallel's Tillman road connecting the Wild Oak parking lot to the Wolf Ridge parking lot, and a front country entrance from Stokesville up onto Narrowback Mountain which will enhance connectivity and reduce road use and maintenance.

Thanks to all the Forest staff and Forest patrons for supporting this project!

Sincerely,

Chris Scott