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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I am an active trail maintainer with the Carolina Mountain Club. Our club works a stretch of the AT as it traverses Max Patch, one of a handful of Southern Appalachian mountain top balds, as you know. We also maintain the various access trails at Max Patch which connect to the AT. Over the past several years as recreational use of Max Patch has substantially increased (I have personally counted over 50 vehicles at one time parked along the road side, creating potentially dangerous conditions), Carolina Mountain Club has devoted multiple work days in an attempt to keep hikers on the designated trails and restore the numerous, and often rapidly eroding informal trails. This work, in coordination with NFS, has included building a split rail fence, planting blackberry thickets, and construction of a visitor kiosk that highlights the unique and fragile nature of Max Patch. We also make a point on our work days of collecting trash and abandoned camping gear and hauling it out. Sadly, our success in helping to preserve Max Patch has been limited. The infrastructure currently in place - an often muddy parking lot with capacity for about a dozen cars, and the aforementioned kiosk - is woefully inadequate to handle the number of visitors.

I share all of this to make the point that Max Patch is slowly but surely being degraded. Please, add Max Patch to the FS project list. It clearly deserves priority status.

Sincerely, Steve Forst