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Comments:

I live in Western North Carolina and am a Trail Ambassador for Max Patch with the Carolina Mountain Club. During a recent visit to Max Patch I observed significant damage to the area due to overuse and people not following leave no trace protocols. There was an abundant amount of toilet paper and trash, unwanted tents and camping equipment, discarded food, and over 80 visible fire rings. While much of the problem stems from careless people, part of the issue is there is a lack of GOOD signage for the trail and STRONG fencing to keep people off protected areas. There is a lack of good AVAILABLE parking since the area is so small people park in the roads and block traffic and local residents' accessibility to their homes. Max Patch is a jewel of WNC and the national forest and is a highly visited area. It requires funding for its protection and to improve conditions before they deteriorate even more. A project must be prioritized to construct adequate fencing and signage, improve parking, and BUILD toilets in the parking area for health and environmental safety.