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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I am the immediate past president of the Carolina Mountain Club. For several years we have been working to save Max Patch from overuse and abuse. We have taken many steps to keep people on the official trail system. These include extensive fencing, trail rehabilitation, signage along the trail, a new kiosk to inform visitors and the establishment of a Trail Ambassador program to educate the public about Leave No Trace, collect data and pick up trash. While the situation has improved some, the problem will not be resolved until we get adequate parking and restrooms away from the bottom of Max Patch. This situation is critical as we have hundreds of cars lining the road on a given day and a party atmosphere on the bald due to the ease of access. The lack of restrooms has created an unsanitary and unsightly condition, and the crowds have created a safety issue on the roadway and on the bald. The list of projects for the Great American Outdoors Act does not currently include any funding for Max Patch. I believe this is a grave mistake. As the jewel of the Appalachian Trail in this area, it deserves to be saved from abuse. It should occupy a priority above other projects that will not do as much to protect our National Forest and the Appalachian Trail. Please reconsider your list and priorities so that Max Patch receives the funding it needs to save it from the current disastrous situation.