



NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA

USDA FOREST SERVICE, 160A ZILICOA STREET, ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

NEWS • RELEASE

Contact: Terry Seyden, 828-257-4202
Melissa Carlson 828-257-4849

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Bent Creek Visitors Urged to Exercise Caution During Construction

Visitors to Bent Creek Experimental Forest should exercise caution during the next few weeks as work begins on several research projects. Approximately four miles of old woods roads, which are also part of the designated mountain bike trail system at Bent Creek, are being reconstructed to provide access to a number of ongoing research and demonstration projects.

The Forest Service is taking steps to try to minimize inconvenience to visitors, while maintaining public safety. Warning signs will be posted where road reconstruction and timber felling is occurring, and in some cases short sections of some roads and trails may be temporarily closed. Visitors to Bent Creek are urged to check the information kiosk at the entrance to Bent Creek Experimental Forest to determine which roads or trails might be temporarily blocked, and where to expect possible heavy vehicle traffic.

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Currently roadwork is occurring on Trail 145 (Sidehill Trail) from Ledford Gap towards Boyd Branch and also on part of Trail 136 (Little Hickory Top Trail.) The road surface along these trails is extremely soft so users should temporarily avoid this route. The section of Trail 145 from Boyd Branch heading up the mountain towards “5 Points” is also being re-constructed and is soft in places.

Most of the roadwork should be completed within several weeks, pending weather. Once the roadwork is done and research timber-harvesting operations begin, timber felling could take place on weekends. However no timber hauling will be allowed on weekends or federal holidays. On weekdays, visitors may encounter some heavy vehicle traffic along Bent Creek Gap Road (FS 479.)

Of the 39 miles of designated trails with the bent Creek Experimental Forest, approximately 3.3 miles will be affected by the current road reconstruction and research silvicultural treatment. If trail users temporarily avoid Ledford Gap and Boyd Branch roads and Trail 145 they should not be impacted by any of these operations at this time. The Forest Service will try to provide frequent updates on the status and conditions of Bent Creek’s roads and trails. More information, including detailed maps, is available at the National Forests in North Carolina website: <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc> and the Bent Creek Experimental Forest website: <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/bentcreek/>.

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