



# **NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA**

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

## **NEWS • RELEASE**

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### **New Bent Creek Trails Map Available**

**The USDA Forest Service announced today the availability of a new trails map for the Southern Research Station's Bent Creek Experimental Forest, just west of Asheville, NC. According to Pisgah District Ranger Randy Burgess, "Over the last several years, a series of user-created trails have sprung up at Bent Creek. These unauthorized trails are impacting current research activities at the Experimental Forest. Also, many trail users have told us it has been almost impossible for them to tell which trails were legally open to mountain bikes and which ones were not. In response, we are taking a number of actions, including physically closing off the unauthorized trails, putting up trailhead information signs, and clearly marking the trails that are officially open for mountain bike or horse use. The new trails map should also make it easier for visitors to know which trails it is ok for them to ride their bikes or horses on."**

**"This summer, we will work with local mountain bike clubs and the research staff at Bent Creek Experimental Forest to physically close off and rehabilitate those user created trails that are not part of the official trail system," said Burgess. "We will also be working with mountain bike club volunteers to reroute the Green Licks Trail to a better location."**

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A limited number of copies of the new Bent Creek trails map are available at U.S. Forest Service offices at Bent Creek, Asheville, and Brevard, and mountain bike shops in the Asheville area. A printable version of the map can also be downloaded from the National Forests in North Carolina website: <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc> or the Southern Research Station website: <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/bentcreek>.

Burgess reminds forest visitors “At Bent Creek Experimental Forest, mountain bikes and horses are allowed only on specific designated trails and roads. All designated roads and trails are marked by vertical signs. Trails are also marked with painted blazes. So we are asking all our mountain bike and horse riding friends to ride only on the designated, blazed trails.”

Dr. David Loftis, Project Leader for Bent Creek Experimental Forest explains, “While the primary mission of Bent Creek is to conduct long term forest research and demonstration of results, we believe that if carefully planned and managed, the area can continue to provide outstanding recreation opportunities.”

“We appreciate the mountain bike community’s willingness to help maintain the area’s trail system and work with us to minimize conflicts between our ongoing research activities and recreational uses of the area,” Loftis added.

Bent Creek Experimental Forest is one of the oldest research forests in the country and is the site of long-term research on the ecology and management of Southern Appalachian forests.

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