

July 10, 2023

Dear Logan Free,

The Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments to the 2023 Fee Proposal for Mountain Bike and Horse Trail Systems in the Pisgah Ranger District.

SORBA is fully supportive of the purpose and need for the proposed fee. We recognize the need to increase funding for mountain bike and horse trail maintenance within the heavily used network on the Pisgah Ranger District. The additional funding will help support much needed trail maintenance and further enhance the user experience. We are encouraged to see an importance put toward funding for maintenance of these incredibly important trails.

While we are in support of the purpose of the fee and acknowledge the need, SORBA does have some concerns about the current proposal and would like to see some additional attention put toward some further logistics prior to implementation of the new user fee.

**Concerns:**

SORBA would like to be further engaged around these topics.

- The network of trails and trailheads within the Pisgah Ranger District is numerous and expansive. Due to the nature of the trail system enforcement of this new fee would be challenging with current staff on the Pisgah. We would like further clarification on how this new fee will be enforced.
- With the remote character of many trailheads and the numerous entrances to the Pisgah Ranger District, collecting the proposed fee will be a challenge. The fee proposal does not include information on how the trail user will purchase a pass. We would like further clarification on how the Forest Service will collect the required fee, what infrastructure will be put in place, and what cost will be incurred.
- The 2004 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act states that up to 95% of fees will stay at the local district. The proposal does not specifically state how much of the proposed fee will stay within the Pisgah District. We would like further clarification on how much of the fee will go to support the trail infrastructure and what means will be in place to ensure those funds stay local in perpetuity.

**Suggestions:**

- No one knows the trails and what work needs to be done better than the individuals who use the trails. We would like to see a structure put in place to have a fund formed for trail non profits like Pisgah Area SORBA and Back Country Horsemen to apply for maintenance needs. Putting the funds collected by this proposed fee in the hands of trail advocates will be the most efficient way to take care of the maintenance needs.
- Marketing will be an important aspect of bringing awareness to this proposed fee, both to the user on what projects the fee will go to and after the funds have been spent to make trail improvements. We believe there should be a direct effort to educate the public on the effectiveness of this proposed fee and transparency on how the funds are being spent.



**SOUTHERN OFF-ROAD  
BICYCLE ASSOCIATION**

The Pisgah Ranger District is an important resource to everyone who enjoys the forest. We applaud the effort to create a sustainable funding program to help make sure the trails we all love will remain available to the public. The Forest Service should address our concerns when considering revisions to the proposed fee proposal and should implement our suggestions if the fee is put into place.

Thank you,

Philip Darden  
Executive Director  
Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association