

# Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge

by Buster Moldenhauer

**T**HERE ARE LOTS of camping facilities that tolerate motorcyclists, and there are plenty that are “motorcycle friendly,” but now the number of such places that actually cater to this niche of the travel industry seems to be growing rapidly. One of the latest additions to our menu of motorcycle camping resorts is the Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge at Stecoah, NC. Owner-operators John and Charlene Powell have cleared out a nice, large spot in a pristine valley near Deal’s Gap to set up their brand-new shop.

The proximity to one of the Southeast’s premier riding areas makes this campground more than suitable to serve as “ground zero” for a multi-day tour of the Southern Appalachians. The famous (or infamous—depending on one’s point of view) Deal’s Gap is only a few minutes up the road, and the western terminus of the Cherohala Skyway is equally close.

Iron Horse has all the standard amenities touring motorcycle campers have come to expect, and a few extra features to sweeten the pot. A small stream meanders through the campground, with tent sites on both sides. Small waterfalls in the creek produce just enough natural noise to insure a great sleeping experience. Enough trees have been cleared from the banks of the stream to allow necessary sunlight to get through to the lush, sodded Bermuda “lawn,” where tents may be pitched and which enhances the under-tent padding. Picnic tables and campfire rings add to the quality and convenience of the campsites.

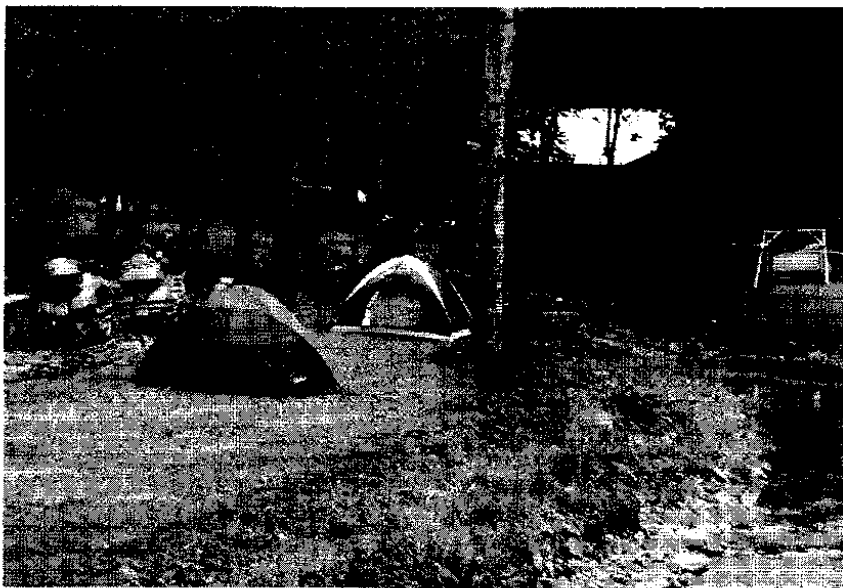
Separate men’s and women’s bath houses are centrally located and feature four individual shower stalls, each with nearby, brand-new hot water heaters to allow for making the shower temp just right. Depending on the campsite, the bath house is either a very short walk or one that is still not long enough to complain about.

The pavilion boasts a large “community room” where meals are served and visitors can congregate for various après-riding activities. A large television with satellite feed provides a glimpse at weather information or important sports activities if the visitor is so inclined. A computer with internet access is an amenity planned for installation in the near future for those who can’t seem to leave their e-mail at home on motorcycle trips.

Charlene serves simple, but plentiful and very tasty meals from the pavilion’s kitchen



Above, the Lodge offers all the amenities you could want, and then some. Below, you can’t beat camping in the trees, on soft grass alongside a stream.



at dinner and breakfast times. One entrée is planned for each evening meal and vegetarian preferences can be accommodated. Breakfast choices are varied enough to get the day started with a good, hot meal or just a snack.

For those who prefer sleeping under a more substantial roof, cabins with semi-private bathrooms are available, as well as rooms in the main lodge. The cabins are not the typical “cardboard box with a permanent roof” variety found in most campgrounds, but “residence quality” duplex type structures where bedrooms are located on each side of a common bathroom area.

At the end of the 2003 summer season, the Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge was very

much a “work in progress,” with facilities complete enough to be useful but certainly not in the finished state that will be available for the 2004 riding season. However, it was easy to tell that this will be a very nice place when it is finished (probably about the time you’re reading this) and it promises to be very much a Great Destination for many riding seasons to come. 🍷

Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge  
SteCoah, NC  
www.ironhorsenc.com  
info@ironhorsenc.com  
(828) 479-3864