



February 2, 2010

## Cliffs gives \$10K for parkway protection

*By Josh Boatwright*

The Cliffs Communities recently donated \$10,000 to help protect views along the Blue Ridge Parkway on a 48-acre tract of land on the borders of Surry and Allegheny counties.

The gift to the Blue Ridge Forever Coalition was a boost to the agency's five-year campaign to protect 50,000 acres in Western North Carolina by the end of 2010.

The Cliffs' donation contributed to the \$125,000 Roaring Forks Headwaters project, which will preserve land adjacent to the parkway that contains the headwaters of the Fisher River.

"Not only are you protecting the parkway, you're also protecting some very valuable natural resources," said Phyllis Stiles, campaign director for Blue Ridge Forever.

The Cliffs has built several golf communities in the Carolinas, including a residential development and golf course in the works designed by Tiger Woods on a high ridge separating Fairview and Swannanoa.

The company has contributed to conservation easements with South Carolina agencies and plans to protect sections of its properties in both states, said Rick Fisher, foundation director for The Cliffs.

"One of the core values of our company is conservation. We believe we are stewards of the land," Fisher said.

"We try to apply that value to how we can be stewards of what we have and provide opportunities for others to have access to land that might not otherwise be conserved."

The Conservation Trust for North Carolina, one of 10 land trusts that partners with Blue Ridge Forever, bought the Roaring Forks tract from a Georgia man who agreed to sell it at a steep discount to ensure it would be protected.

The Cliffs' gift will help make it possible for CTNC to transfer the property to the National Park Service.

The property is near the 3,400-acre Saddle Mountain Wilderness Area and Cumberland Knob National Recreation Area. It adjoins the parkway by connecting with a 201-acre property that was protected by CTNC in 2007.

The Blue Ridge Forever coalition campaign has protected more than 40,000 acres since it began in 2006, Stiles said.

About 70 percent of the 300 projects have been paid for by public funds, with 30 percent coming from private donations like The Cliffs'.

"We think this is a wonderful move in the right direction that developers see the importance of saving the special places in the mountains, and we hope others will consider doing the same," she said.