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Scenic mountain creek protected

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The state has acquired nearly 650 acres along four miles of Caldwell County's Wilson Creek, nationally recognized for its scenic whitewater, a regional land trust said today.

The mountain tract, surrounded by Pisgah National Forest, will be open to the public as state gamelands, said Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina.

Congress designated Wilson Creek a National Wild and Scenic River in 2000. Caldwell residents treasure the creek, which lures trout fishermen and whitewater paddlers from several states.

But the pristine creek has also been the focus of development plans in recent years.

Foothills Conservancy negotiated the \$7 million purchase from the Lutz Family Partnership on behalf of the state more than a year ago, after plans for a 250-home subdivision were shelved. The purchase was completed last week.

"Our parents, O.P. and Mattie Lutz, never wanted this beautiful land to be ravaged and destroyed by poor stewardship," Herbert Lutz of the family partnership said in a statement. "They always desired to have this treasure shared by the people who enjoyed its natural beauty."

Money for the acquisition came from the state's Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund.

The purchase will complement other public and private holdings in the watershed, said Mallory Martin, chief deputy director of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

The conservancy is working with other landowners and Caldwell County officials to further protect the Wilson Creek watershed, said executive director Susie Hamrick Jones.



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g02342000 wrote on 05/22/2009 07:21:23 PM:

The headwaters of Wilson Creek are from springs located midway up Grandfather Mountain along with several tributaries from other springs coming down Grandfather to the John River Basin the short distance from Johns River to Grandfather Mountain (already protected) should all be protected through a land trust. We need to prof our General Assembly to double the size of this latest acquisition as part of North Carolina State Park and protect the whole Wilson Creek basin.

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NCGirl1 wrote on 05/22/2009 04:32:15 PM:

WAY TO GO! Finally some good news. I'd hate to lose such a wonderful place to development.

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NObama wrote on 05/22/2009 04:18:54 PM:

good to hear, we need to save more wilderness from devolpers

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