

Campaign Focus Area 4

North Toe River

Just a mile from Grandfather Mountain in Avery County lies the North Toe River Valley. With headwater streams flowing downriver to 24 municipalities, the North Toe River supplies water to over 400,000 North Carolina residents. This relatively small area is packed with biological diversity including globally rare bog habitats and high-elevation rock outcrops with rare plant communities.



A Threatened Landscape

In 1990, 87% of Avery County was forestland, but this number is quickly diminishing as second-home development encroaches upon this biologically significant landscape. High Country Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land are working to protect these critical waters and habitats.



Photo of Grey's Lily by Jerry Reece

Biological Diversity

The North Toe River Valley has many rare plant communities such as Southern Appalachian Bogs along headwater streams. Three Significant Natural Heritage Areas lie within the Toe River Valley: the Sugar Mountain Natural Area, Lutherock Natural Area and High Haven Natural Area.

Tourism

The North Toe River headwater's proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway, Grandfather Mountain and ski resorts draw numerous tourists. Rock climbing, hiking, fishing and skiing are all activities that visitors enjoy. Natural amenities and traditional crafts are the foundation of Avery County's tourism industry.



Photo by Tucker Burks

Climbing to "Luther Rock" is a popular activity for kids staying at Camp Lutherock.



Photo by Tucker Burks

Family Farming

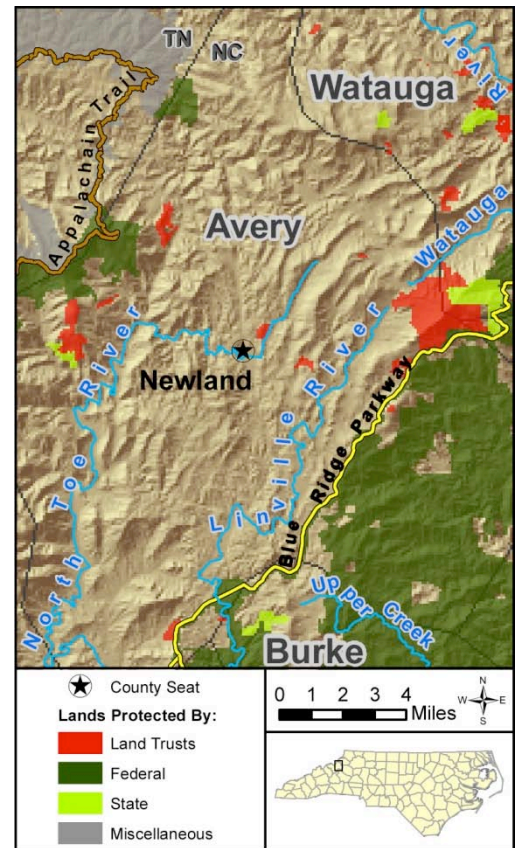
The Toe River Valley is largely made up of private landowners who have owned the land for many generations. "Over 100 years ago, our great-grandparents, Leppo and Missouri Banner, settled into this special place in the Appalachian Mountains," said Dawn Burks who conserved her land in 2007. "Five generations have since toiled and played amidst its natural beauty. It has become a part of who we are and provided special memories that tie us together."

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Once a remote area tucked away between Newland and Banner Elk, the area is now experiencing sky-rocketing residential and resort development. Blue Ridge Forever partners identified the Toe River Valley as a focus area because of its biological significance, importance to drinking water supply and high threat of development.

Three "Significant Natural Heritage Areas" lie in the North Toe River Valley, one of which has national significance for a globally-rare Southern Appalachian Bog. These habitats are priorities in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), a comprehensive plan developed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and many partners to help conserve the state's wildlife and their habitats.

High Country Conservancy (HCC) has led land protection efforts in the Toe River Valley. In 2006, HCC protected the High Haven Natural Area, a 100-acre preserve of high quality northern hardwood forests and swamp-forest bog. The conservation easement protects in perpetuity 3,600 linear feet of native forest along the Toe River. Keeping these "riparian buffers" protected is a key strategy to preserving the quality of drinking water and aquatic wildlife habitat. In 2007, HCC continued the effort of land conservation with the "Banner Valley Conservation Easements". This group of family members protected over 128 acres in perpetuity with conservation easements. Together, the donated land value of these projects was over \$1,000,000. Our goal is to protect an additional 1,000 acres of this critical landscape by 2010 with an estimated value of \$10 million.



Leave Your Legacy

There are few ways that you can leave a greater legacy than through land conservation. Please consider a tax-deductible gift to preserve the magnificent landscape of the North Toe River Valley. Each donation brings us one step closer to conserving this highly significant landscape for our great-grandchildren and beyond.

Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the state.

Goal: 1,313 Additional Acres by 2010			
Funding Source	Protected 2006-2007 313 Acres	To Protect 2008-2010 1,000 Acres	TOTAL 1,313 Acres
Private Donations	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Public Funding	\$1,071,130	\$3,000,000	\$4,071,130
Land Value Donations	\$1,925,000	\$6,000,000	\$7,925,000
TOTAL	\$2,996,130	\$10,000,000	\$12,996,130



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High Country Conservancy (HCC) protects the natural resources of Appalachia by protecting land with significant ecological, cultural, recreational or scenic value in the North Carolina High Country. Since its inception in 1997, HCC has led in the conservation of over 2,000 acres including family farms, headwater streams and globally-imperiled ecosystems in the Blue Ridge Mountains. HCC serves Avery, Ashe, and Watauga Counties in North Carolina.



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