

Campaign Focus Area 5

Valle Crucis

In 1840 Bishop Ives of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina came to this remote farming area to establish a school “to teach the rudiments of knowledge and preach the word of God.” When the Bishop saw how Dutch Creek and Clark’s Creek came together in the upper valley, he named the area Valle Crucis, latin for “valley of the cross”.



Photo: Jason Connolly

Conserving North Carolina’s first Rural Historic District

Valle Crucis has been successful in maintaining much of its rural character. In fact, the whole community has been designated as North Carolina’s first “Rural Historic District”. However, it is not as remote as it was when Bishop Ives first arrived. Now tourists from all over the southeast visit this destination. The Valle Country Fair, held in the upper valley pictured above, draws over 10,000 visitors each year. In addition, the area has experienced a significant increase in second-home development. The Valle Crucis community and local conservation groups seek to balance tourism and development with preservation of the landscape that makes this area special.

Biological Diversity

Headwater streams of the Watauga River flow through Valle Crucis and high mountains with rare plant communities surround the valley. Valle Crucis is home to four Significant Natural Heritage Areas: Rocky Face, Valle Mountain, White Rock and Hanging Rock Ridge.



The long-tailed salamander is found in the Watauga River.



Photo of Taylor Family Farm by Miles Tager

Family Farms

The Taylor Family Farm has been in operation in Valle Crucis for seven generations. Scott Jensen, along with his wife Dawn (Taylor) Jensen now raise cattle on the land. In 2002 they preserved their farm with a conservation easement to ensure that farming will continue for the 8th generation.

Historic Places

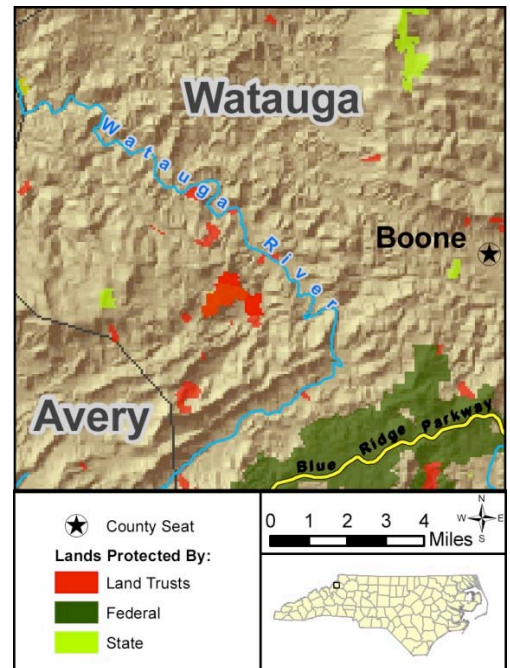
On the National Register of Historic Places, the Mission School gives the scenic byway 194, or *Mission Crossing*, its name. The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina has protected over 250 acres of land on the byway; however, nearby lands are under threat of development



Valle Crucis

High Country Conservancy and its partners, Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust and The Conservation Fund, have been actively protecting land in Valle Crucis for the past ten years. High Country Conservancy has led in the protection of over 700 acres here including a conservation easement on a seventh-generation family farm, another on the farm surrounding the original Mast General Store, and a 200-acre conservation easement on the forested land of the historic mission school which is on the "National Register of Historic Places." In addition, HCC helped the State of North Carolina acquire the first 350 acres of Bear Paw Natural Area on Hanging Rock Mountain overlooking Valle Crucis. Over the past 10 years, HCC has leveraged over \$4 million in public funding and over \$6 million in donated interests in land. Another 875 acres of this landscape, valued at \$7 million, is at immediate risk and targeted for protection by 2010.

Four aquatic and terrestrial natural areas are located in Valle Crucis: Rocky Face, Valley Mountain, White Rock and Hanging Rock Ridge. In addition, the Watauga River and its tributaries, portions of which are designated "High Quality Waters" by the North Carolina Division of Water Quality, flow through Valle Crucis. Amphibian species such as the southern ravine salamander and long-tailed salamander and several bird species such as Cooper's Hawk, Vesper Sparrow and the Warbling Vireo are make their home in Valle Crucis. Each of these species is considered a priority for protection in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), a comprehensive plan developed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission to help conserve the state's wildlife and their habitats.



Valle Crucis Focus Area lies between Boone and Avery County in the valley of the Watauga River.

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 Valle Crucis. Each donation brings us one step closer to conserving this unique historical 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: 970 Additional Acres by 2010			
Funding Source	Protected 2006-2007	To Protect 2008-2010	TOTAL
	95 Acres	875 Acres	970 Acres
Private Donations	\$1,200,025	\$1,508,000	\$2,708,025
Public Funding	\$880,000	\$3,400,000	\$4,280,000
Land Value Donations	\$250,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,250,000
TOTAL	\$2,330,025	\$6,908,000	\$9,238,025



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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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