

Campaign Focus Area 14

Hickory Nut Gorge

Hickory Nut Gorge is a national ecological treasure located 15 miles southeast of Asheville on the Blue Ridge escarpment. Its varied landscape creates a hotspot of biological diversity in the southeastern United States. Largely because of its extraordinary natural beauty, Hickory Nut Gorge is threatened by intensive second home development. The creation of one of North Carolina's newest state parks, Chimney Rock, will permanently protect up to 6,000 acres of this exquisite landscape.



Deep Gorges Support Ecological Diversity

Carved by the Rocky Broad River, the eight-mile Hickory Nut Gorge begins along the Eastern Continental Divide, plunges 1,800 feet past Chimney Rock and ends at Lake Lure. The gorge's incredible biodiversity is born of its varied topography, unique weather, numerous caves, cascading falls and streams, intact watersheds and extensive forest blocks. Hickory Nut Gorge's location, natural beauty and recreational opportunities make it highly susceptible to pressures from development and rapidly increasing land use.

Biological Diversity

Hickory Nut Gorge hosts 14 plant community types, seven of which are rare. It is home to 37 rare plant species and 14 rare animal species, such as the globally rare white irisette, state rare broadleaf coreopsis, state endangered green salamander and the Indiana bat – a species found in the world's largest fissure cave located in the Gorge. The area's high peaks and steep slopes host an array of avian species including the peregrine falcon and a number of neotropical migratory songbirds. The State Wildlife Action Plan emphasizes the need to protect the habitat of many special plants and animals that inhabit Hickory Nut Gorge.

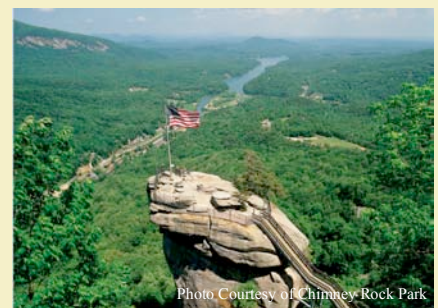


Scenic Significance

The new Chimney Rock State Park is being built around iconic Chimney Rock, World's Edge and Rumbling Bald, place names that speak to the dramatic scenery found throughout Hickory Nut Gorge. Future acquisitions will protect the slopes and peaks above picturesque Lake Lure, protecting the scenery and habitat of one of North Carolina's most dramatic gorges.

Economic Significance

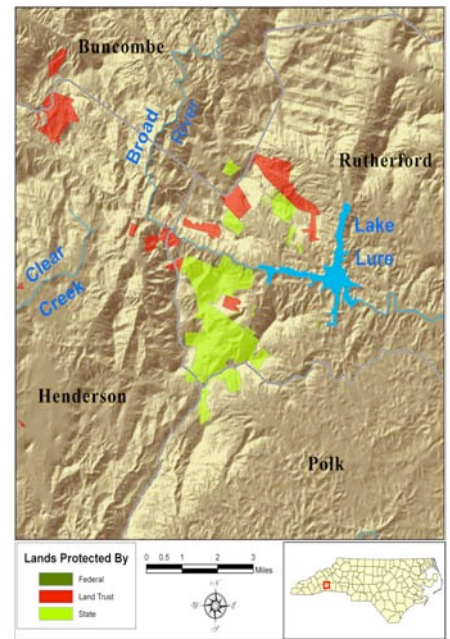
The steep cliffs, rocky outcrops, cascading waterfalls and extensive forests of Hickory Nut Gorge make it a prominent recreational destination for rock climbers, birders, hikers, picnicking families, campers and mountain bikers. The new Chimney Rock State Park will attract visitors who wish to experience the wilderness beauty of the Gorge. Coupled with Lake Lure, Hickory Nut Gorge is one of North Carolina's most popular tourist destinations.



Hickory Nut Gorge

Faced with a recent rush of development around Lake Lure and along surrounding slopes and ridges, three land conservancies have partnered with the N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation to form the Hickory Nut Gorge Protection Partnership. Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina and The Nature Conservancy are working with a host of local partners to protect this rugged landscape by acquiring lands for the new Chimney Rock State Park and by working with landowners to secure permanent conservation agreements that will protect Hickory Nut Gorge for its natural denizens as well as its human residents and visitors.

Since 2005, the conservancies have acquired 3,733 acres for the new park, beginning with the 1,568-acre, \$16 million World's Edge tract. In 2006, the N.C. Legislature appropriated \$15 million for the purchase of Chimney Rock Park, and in 2007 the 996-acre park was purchased for \$25 million, becoming the centerpiece of the new Chimney Rock State Park. Cane Creek Mountain and other smaller tracts have also been secured for the park, and the conservancies continue to negotiate acquisitions of other priority parcels to help the State build a 5- 6,000-acre park that permanently protects and provides public access to much of the Hickory Nut Gorge.



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 Hickory Nut Gorge. Each donation brings us one step closer to conserving this scenic and biological treasure 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: 3,925 Acres by 2010			
Funding Source	Protected 2006-2007 1,925 Acres	To Protect 2008-2010 2,000 Acres	TOTAL 3,925 Acres
Private Donations	\$3,400,000	\$2,000,000	\$5,400,000
Public Funding	\$35,100,000	\$36,000,000	\$71,100,000
Land Donation Value	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
TOTAL	\$38,500,000	\$40,000,000	\$78,500,000



FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY
OF NORTH CAROLINA



Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina – Susie Hamrick Jones, Executive Director
P.O. Box 3023, Morganton, NC 28680 Telephone: 828-437-9930

www.foothillsconservancy.org

Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina (FCNC) cooperates with landowners and communities to preserve and protect the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains and their foothills, including environmentally significant habitats; forests and farmland; and the Broad, Catawba and Yadkin rivers' headwaters. Since 1995, FCNC has protected 43,000+ acres through public land acquisitions – expanding Pisgah National Forest, N.C. Wildlife Resources' game lands, and Chimney Rock, Lake James and South Mountains State Parks -- and via private conservation easements and conservancy preserve acquisitions. FCNC serves Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, Rutherford, Cleveland, Lincoln, Catawba and Alexander counties.

Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy – Kieran Roe, Executive Director
P. O. Box 2822, Hendersonville, NC 28793 Telephone: 828-697-5777

www.carolinamountain.org

Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (CMLC) envisions a region in western North Carolina where, in the face of continued rapid growth and development over coming decades, sufficient farm, forest, park, natural land and water resources will be conserved to safeguard the region's unique natural heritage and quality of life for future generations. As an effective local nonprofit organization dedicated to saving the places you love, CMLC is helping to create a regional network of more than 17,700 acres in Henderson, Transylvania and neighboring parts of Buncombe, Jackson and Rutherford counties in western North Carolina.