

Campaign Focus Area 1

New River Headwaters

Originating in the northwestern corner of North Carolina, swelling as it travels through Virginia and on to West Virginia, and estimated to be 300 million years old, the New River ironically is considered one of the oldest rivers in the world. In 1976, a 26-mile stretch of the New River became a federally designated National Scenic River. Then, in 1998 President Bill Clinton visited the New River to officially designate it an American Heritage River, one of only fourteen in the nation. What arouses such widespread interest in the New?



Threats to the New River

The New River originates as two forks, the North and South Forks, on the western side of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Watauga County. They converge in Ashe County as the New River, which flows northward into Virginia. The high peaks and steep mountainsides surrounding the New River have traditionally protected the basin from sprawl and development; however, as flat land becomes scarcer and second-home owners discover the picturesque mountains, the difficult terrain is less of a deterrent. Water quality concerns within the basin include the increased erosion and runoff development brings. Fish and other aquatic species in many of the New River's tributaries have been harmed.

Biological Diversity

The region has numerous species exclusively found in the area, such as the Kanawha minnow, sharpnose darter and Kanawha darter. Old Field and Call creeks are home to naturally reproducing populations of brook trout, the state's only native trout species. Other rare aquatic animals, like the bog turtle, share the basin. In fact, the basin contains the highest number of bogs in the state. With nearly 90% of North Carolina's bogs having been drained or converted, the State Wildlife Action Plan has deemed bogs a critical habitat.



Bog Turtle



Cultural Heritage

The New transported runaway slaves on their journey north in the 1800s and traditionally has been a hot spot for all manner of grassroots activism. It is the most rural of the fourteen American Heritage Rivers. Traditional Southern Appalachian culture is predominant, with a strong emphasis on kinship, community and religion. This sense of place rallied these longstanding neighbors to successfully oppose damming the river in 1974.

Economic Significance

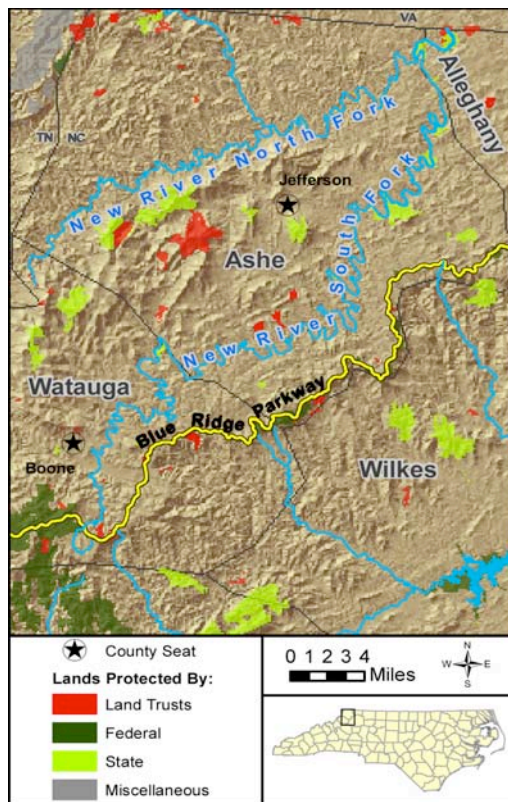
The New's headwaters create a haven for agriculture and recreation. Over one third of Ashe County is farmland, generating \$48 million for the local economy through the production of Christmas trees, row crops, tobacco, dairy and beef. The County is the largest supplier of Christmas trees in North Carolina. In addition to the surrounding mountains' abundant hiking opportunities, the New River's pristine waters have world-class small mouth bass fishing and offer great paddling for kayakers and canoeists.



New River Headwaters

Together, National Committee for the New River, Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust, and High Country Conservancy work to protect lands important to preserving the water quality of the New River, the rural character of the New River Headwaters, and the unique cultural, recreational and scenic values present in the New River Headwater's communities. The National Committee for the New River envisions a permanently protected New River as a treasured natural resource. Its mission is to advocate for successful protection of the New River, to restore eroding river and stream banks, to enhance riparian habitat, and to permanently protect land along the river.

Since 1974, the National Committee for the New River has restored more than 66 miles of river and stream bank and protected over 5,000 acres of land important to the river's water quality, scenic and natural values. The Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust has preserved nearly 10,000 acres in seven northwestern North Carolina counties, and is committed to helping communities retain their rural landscape, heritage and culture and keep working lands working. The High Country Conservancy's mission is to protect the natural resources of Appalachia by conserving land with significant ecological, cultural, recreational, or scenic value in the North Carolina High Country. High Country Conservancy has preserved over 2,000 acres in three counties.



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 New River Headwaters.

Financial information about these organizations and copies of their licenses are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the state.

Goal: 5,000 Additional Acres by 2010			
Funding Source	Protected 2006-2007 2,057 Acres	To Protect 2008-2010 2,943 Acres	TOTAL 5,000 Acres
Private Donations	\$947,546	\$4,000,000	\$4,947,546
Public Funding	\$8,213,417	\$6,000,000	\$14,213,417
Land Value Donations	\$5,664,150	\$6,000,000	\$11,664,150
TOTAL	\$14,825,113	\$16,000,000	\$30,825,113



National Committee for the New River
PO Box 1480, West Jefferson, NC 28694
336-982-NCNR (6267) www.ncnr.org; info@ncnr.org



Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust
PO Box 669, West Jefferson, NC 29694
336-846-2758 www.brrlt.org; info@brrlt.org



High Country Conservancy
290 Queen Street, Boone, NC 28607
828-264-2511 www.highcountryconservancy.org;
info@highcountryconservancy.org



Blue Ridge Forever, 34 Wall Street, Suite 802A, Asheville, NC 28801
Phyllis Stiles, Campaign Director Telephone: 828-253-0095 x 212
Website: www.blueridgeforever.info