

Campaign Focus Area 15

Hickorynut Mountain

Perhaps the largest remaining privately-owned tract of land in western North Carolina, Hickorynut Mountain is a unique opportunity to preserve an extension of the eastern Blue Ridge Mountains escarpment. About 8,400 acres of unfragmented forests and wildlife habitat provide a critical landscape “bridge” between protected conservation lands of the Catawba River Headwaters and Pisgah National Forest east to 45,000 acres of state lands in the South Mountains.



Photo: Foothills Conservancy

NC Blue Ridge’s Largest Protection Opportunity with Exceptional Natural Heritage

Purchased by investors in 2006, Hickorynut Mountain is highly vulnerable to re-sale for development because of its close proximity to prime residential markets of Asheville and Lake Lure/Chimney Rock. Acquiring and protecting this tract would secure the largest unprotected state-significant natural heritage area in western North Carolina.

Biological Diversity

Hickorynut Mountain’s natural communities and diverse, expansive habitats host five significantly rare plant and two rare animal species. The eastern woodrat (Appalachian population) and sweet pinesap are federal species of concern. Exemplary natural community types of the Blue Ridge and Southern Appalachians such as low elevation granitic domes, Carolina hemlock bluffs, and rich cove forests are found there. Numerous headwater streams appear where the Catawba and Broad river basins meet. Additionally, low elevation cliffs and outcrops are critical foraging and nesting habitat for the peregrine falcon.



Crevice Salamander



Photo: Foothills Conservancy

Habitat & Scenic Significance

As a 7,830-acre unfragmented Natural Heritage site, Hickorynut Mountain provides important “core” habitat for black bears between the Blue Ridge and South Mountains. Still, much remains undocumented about its habitat and significance as a vital wildlife corridor.

Prominently seen from the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mt Mitchell, and the Blue Ridge Escarpment along Interstate 40 in McDowell County, this mountain landscape provides unbroken forests and scenery.

Economic Significance

The tract is considered a high priority acquisition opportunity for North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for a major new public game land. As a new Blue Ridge Mountains destination, it will capitalize on natural assets and help tourism-based economic development efforts in McDowell County by attracting hunters and anglers from NC and nearby states. A traditional rural economy based upon forestry and agriculture is transitioning to an economy dependent upon quality of life aspects such as access to clean water, stunning views, open space and a rural lifestyle.

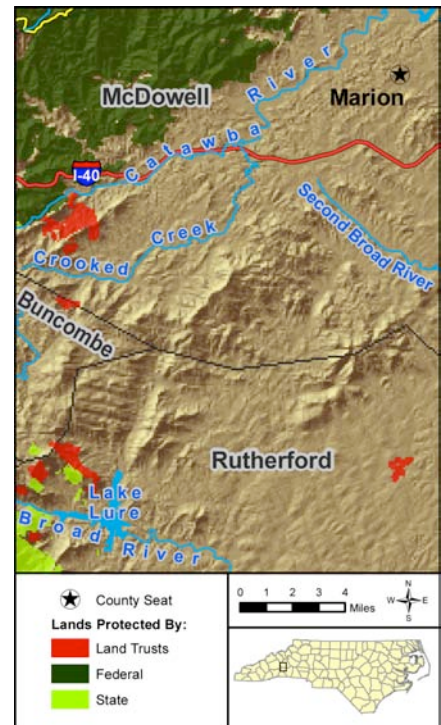


Hickorynut Mountain

Foothills Conservancy, in partnership with The Conservation Fund and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC), is actively pursuing acquisition of 8,400 acres that form Hickorynut Mountain as public conservation land and new wildlife game lands. Located southeast of the Black Mountains and north from Chimney Rock, the acquisition of Hickorynut Mountain is one of WRC's highest priorities in Western North Carolina. An anticipated \$2 million in private funds and \$8 million in donated land value are needed to leverage an estimated \$40,000,000 in public funds between 2008- 2010 for this \$50 million opportunity.

Preservation of the tract's natural heritage and resource values is a keystone strategy for the long-term goal of securing lands through both private conservation easements and public acquisitions to connect Pisgah National Forest and the new Chimney Rock State Park to 45,000 acres of state park and game land in the South Mountains. Hickorynut Mountain contains headwaters of both the Catawba and Broad rivers, supplying clean drinking water to millions in the Carolinas.

Acquiring large tracts for game lands is a key strategy of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). Cove forest and low elevation rock outcrop habitats are priorities in this comprehensive plan developed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and partners to help conserve the state's wildlife and their habitats.



Hickory Nut Mountain is situated between the Second Broad River and Lake Lure

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 help protect and conserve the geographically unique and biologically rich Hickorynut Mountains.

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.

Proposed Funding for Protection of an Additional 8,400 Acres by 2010

Private Donations	\$2,000,000
Public Funding	\$40,000,000
Land Value Donations	\$8,000,000
TOTAL	\$50,000,000



FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY
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Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina is dedicated to landowners and communities to preserve and protect important natural areas and open spaces of the eastern Blue Ridge Mountains and Foothills, including watersheds, environmentally significant habitats, forests and farmland, for this and future generations. Foothills Conservancy has protected more than 43,000 acres since 1995. Serving Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Lincoln, McDowell and Rutherford counties and the headwaters of the Broad, Catawba, and Yadkin rivers, Foothills Conservancy has added thousands of acres to Pisgah National Forest, three state parks at Chimney Rock, Lake James and the South Mountains, and several major state game lands. The Conservancy is also dedicated to protecting significant private forests and farm lands with conservation easements.

Blue Ridge Forever
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