High Country Regional Trail Plan

Background and Purpose

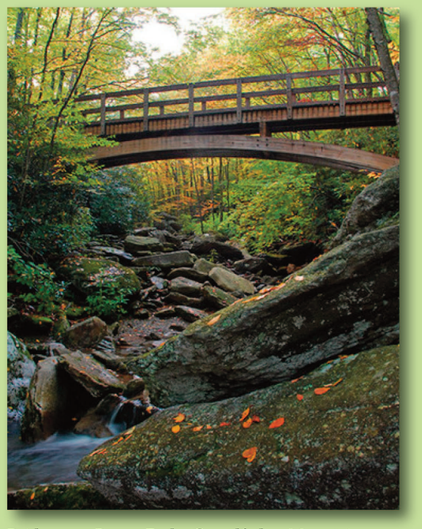
Tanawha Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation - State Trails Program is working with various agencies across North Carolina to develop regional trail systems that will interconnect in a statewide trail network. The goal of these regional plans is to guide federal, state, and local efforts for trail development, park development, and land conservation. Building on the successful Mountains to Sea Trail project, the regional plans provide a blueprint for connecting public lands, communities, and significant natural features across the state.

Trails provide communities with many benefits, including public health, economic development, recreation opportunities, and transportation options. Developing a coordinated plan for future trails will help ensure efficient use of limited State and local resources.

High Country Region

The High Country Region includes Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties in northwestern North Carolina. The region is traversed by the Blue Ridge Parkway, contains five State Parks, and includes over 450,000 acres of Pisgah National Forest. Forty-eight miles of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail are currently developed in the region, with another 85 miles planned. The Appalachian Trail runs for 41 miles along the northern edge of Yancey, Mitchell, and Avery Counties. Additionally, many smaller trails exist in the Towns, State Parks, and Federal lands.



Bridge over Boone Fork , Grandfather Mountain

Development of High Country Regional Trail Plan

Appalachian Trail , Roan Mountain

The High Country Regional Trail Plan was developed by a group of land managers, local governments, State Park staff, National Park Service staff, land trusts, and other trail advocates. The NC Division of Parks and Recreation - State Trails Program provided funding and project oversight. The Plan identifies 389 miles of proposed trails in the region, shown on the map on the reverse side of this brochure. In addition to providing linkages between the Mountains-to-Sea and Appalachian Trails, the Plan includes connections between public lands, routes along abandoned railroad corridors, and several trails following river valleys.

Town of Boone Greenway

Another significant component of the High Country Regional Trail Plan is the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVT). The OVT is part of the National Trails System, and when complete will consist of 330 miles of trail commemorating the 1780 march of the patriot militia through Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Approximately 50 miles of the OVT are located in the High Country region.

Yadkin River Greenway, Wilkes County

Implementation

Implementation of the High Country Regional Trail Plan will require effort of many partners. State and Federal land managers, local governments, land conservation groups, organized trail groups, private property owners, land developers, and individual citizens all have a stake and role in the Trail Plan.

Local governments in the High Country region are encouraged to take the following actions:

1. Officially adopt the High Country Regional Trail Plan
2. Share the Trail Plan with Parks and Recreation Boards, Planning Boards, and other interested parties in their jurisdictions
3. Incorporate the Trail Plan into local land-use, recreation, transportation, or comprehensive plans
4. Require trail easements in new developments where applicable
5. Commit to plan, acquire land, design, build, and manage recommended trail segments in their jurisdictions
6. Promote the plan on websites and other local outlets
7. Support the efforts of trail advocacy groups in their jurisdictions

Contact Information

High Country Council of Governments
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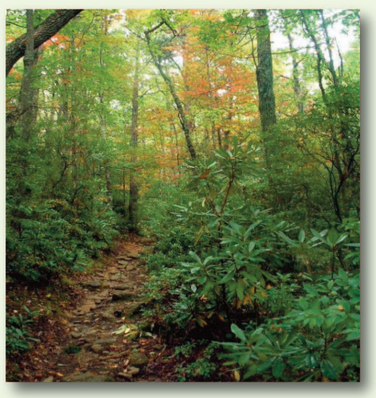
NC State Trails Program (main office)
NC Division of Parks and Recreation
1615 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615
(919) 715-8699
http://www.ncparks.gov

NC State Trails Program (Asheville office)
DENR Asheville Regional Office
2090 US Highway 70
Swannanoa, NC 28778
(828) 296-4692



Pisgah National Forest, Avery County

High Country Regional Trail Plan

- Existing Regional Trails
- Proposed Regional Trails*
- Existing Local Trails
- Proposed Local Trails
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Major Roads
- Abandoned Railroads
- Railroads
- Hydrology
- Public Lands
- Municipality
- County Boundary

Elevation
High : 6672 ft
Low : 1761 ft

Avery, Ashe, Alleghany, Watauga, Wilkes, Mitchell, & Yancey Counties

* Proposed Regional Trails are labeled by trail name

Proposed Local Trail Names:

Yancey
1. Callaway Mountain Trail
2. Bowlens Creek
3. Flattop Mountain Connector

Mitchell
4. Roan Mountain Connector
5. Bakersville Creekwalk to Cane Creek Park

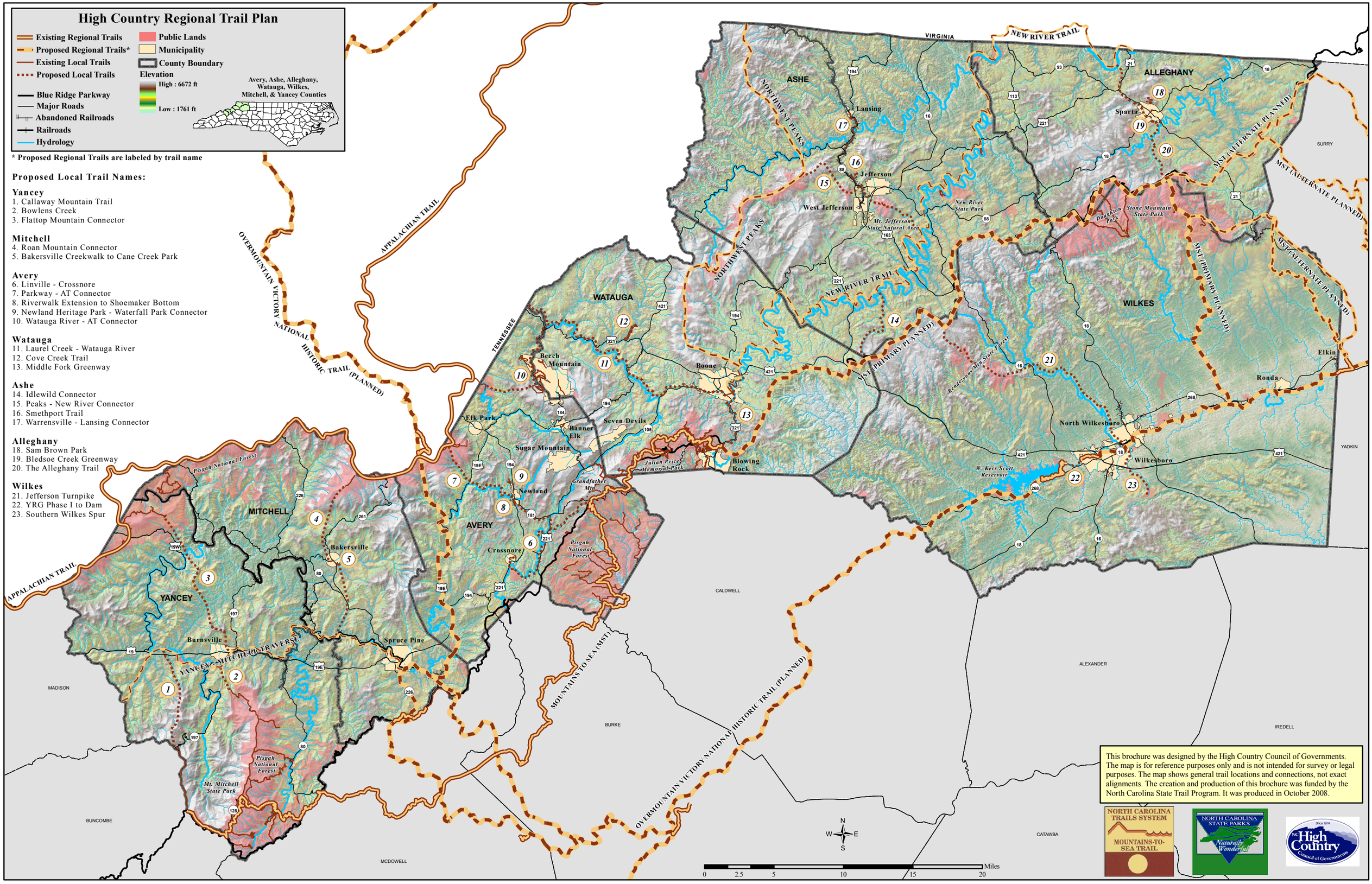
Avery
6. Linville - Crossnore
7. Parkway - AT Connector
8. Riverwalk Extension to Shoemaker Bottom
9. Newland Heritage Park - Waterfall Park Connector
10. Watauga River - AT Connector

Watauga
11. Laurel Creek - Watauga River
12. Cove Creek Trail
13. Middle Fork Greenway

Ashe
14. Idlewild Connector
15. Peaks - New River Connector
16. Smethport Trail
17. Warrensville - Lansing Connector

Alleghany
18. Sam Brown Park
19. Bledsoe Creek Greenway
20. The Alleghany Trail

Wilkes
21. Jefferson Turnpike
22. YRG Phase I to Dam
23. Southern Wilkes Spur



This brochure was designed by the High Country Council of Governments. The map is for reference purposes only and is not intended for survey or legal purposes. The map shows general trail locations and connections, not exact alignments. The creation and production of this brochure was funded by the North Carolina State Trail Program. It was produced in October 2008.

NORTH CAROLINA TRAILS SYSTEM
MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS
Naturally Wonderful

Since 1974
The High Country
Council of Governments