

LIVING TRADITIONS OF THE BLUE RIDGE
STORIES FROM THE BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
www.blueridgeheritage.com

MUSIC

Black Classical Music Roots In North Carolina

Nina Simone www.eunicewaymonbirthplace.blogs.com

Nina Simone, internationally known jazz singer, was born in Tryon, NC in 1933. Born Eunice Kathleen Waymon, her natural musical talent was recognized early on, and the community came together to support her musical development through lessons and performances.

Nina introduced the world to a unique musical infusion of pop, gospel, classical, jazz, folk and ballads that she called "Black Classical Music." Her voice and music were instrumental in the American Civil Rights Movement.

The Eunice Waymon-Nina Simone Memorial Project was established to accomplish four related goals www.ninasimoneproject.org :

- Support a broad-based education program, including: the creation of an endowed Nina Simone scholarship, the development of an educational jazz curriculum highlighting the musical contributions of prominent North Carolinians to the songbook of American popular music, the archival preservation of Simone's material record and the promotion of Simone as an important Tryon and Polk County, North Carolina cultural and heritage resource.
- Commission a life-sized, memorial, bronze sculpture for a public art installation.
- Develop a Trans-World Music Festival in the name of Nina Simone as a signature Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina event.
- Provide outreach partnering opportunities for Simone's designated charities: cancer research in underserved communities, arts programming in public education, prevention of abuse against women, and AIDS research, education and care.

The Nina Simone Birthplace is being restored and should be open to the public late 2009 – www.eunicewaymonbirthplace.blog.com

Contact: Melinda Massey Young, First Peak of the Blue Ridge (Polk County Travel & Tourism) 828-894-2324 myoung@firstpeaknc.com (also contact for below).

King Pup Radio Show

Western North Carolina's traditional Appalachian music is being promoted worldwide through the King Pup Radio Show and www.RadioYUR.com. Both programs are produced locally by Phil and Gaye Johnson, who host the shows, perform and feature the region's many talented musicians and storytellers.

-more-

John C. Campbell Folk School: “Nighthoots & Morningsongs”

“Nighthoots & Morningsongs is a compilation of songs performed by musicians residing mostly in the 28902 (Brasstown, NC) zip code. The music is old-time, classical, original, jazz, standard, spiritual, and just plain odd...” - Jan Davidson, Folk School Director.

Jan virtually went door-to-door to uncover the most versatile musical talent in this pocket of WNC. He is so passionate about this project and the music of Brasstown. Jan’s storytelling talents are evident when he talks about the journey to producing “Nighthoots & Morningsongs”.

Produced by the Folk School's Folklorist David Brose, the CD was released in December of 2007. It is available for purchase in the Folk School's Craft Shop for \$15.95 and will soon be available for purchase online at CD Baby and for downloading from the iTunes Store. The project is supported and funded by a grant from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.

Contact: K.C. Cronin 828-279-1250, kdcronin@charter.net

Jan Davidson Receives North Carolina's Top Honor

Folk School Director Jan Davidson received the 2007 North Carolina Award for Fine Arts in November 2007.

The North Carolina Award is the highest civilian honor the state can bestow. Jan Davidson has been the director of the Folk School since 1992 and the school has gone through a period of revitalization largely because of his leadership, vision and hard work.

Since 1964, just over 200 men and women have received this great honor, including Maya Angelou and Doc Watson.

“These awards are our most prestigious civilian honor and are given to those North Carolinians whose contributions to the state are enduring and truly significant,” said North Carolina Governor Mike Easley. “We are fortunate to live in a state with so many outstanding individuals who, through their leadership, their talents and their time, have helped make North Carolina a better place to live.”

-more-

Music Meets Mysterious Murder

Being a fiddler himself, Tom Dooley would have felt at home at the Happy Valley Old-time Fiddlers' Convention on the Jones Farm, the final resting place of Laura Foster. Tom Dooley, a local man who served during the Civil War, was accused in 1867 of murdering a neighbor, Laura Foster. The events surrounding this crime, and Dooley's subsequent trial and execution, live on in North Carolina's best-known murder ballad and in stories passed down in local families. Each year during Labor Day weekend, visitors pay homage to the legends and stories of this 28-mile Yadkin River Valley known as Happy Valley. Happy Valley and the areas along N.C. Highway 268 are worth celebrating because little has changed in generations.

The Happy Valley Old-time Fiddlers' Convention offers cash prizes for fiddle, banjo, guitar, and mandolin as well as Bluegrass and Old-time band competitions. Along with the instrument playing, the event offers folk singing, instrument making, old-time dance demonstrations, hayride tours, corn shucking, flat footing, and local home-cooked delicacies.

Contact: Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, Lenoir, NC (828) 726-0616
www.explorecaledwell.com

JUNIOR APPALACHIAN MUSICIANS

Kids from the 4th - 8th grade, who have never played a tune, are taught the traditional music of their heritage. The kids are preserving a vital part of the Appalachian Mountain culture but are motivated by the pure fun of playing old time music. They can choose fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, bass and dulcimer. Small groups of 7-10 meet after school in Alleghany County, NC and learn from the masters. The program also includes regional music history, music theory and traditional dance. www.juniorappalachianmusicians.org

Contact: K.C. Cronin, 828-279-1250 kdcronin@charter.net

Old Fort Mountain Music

For more than two decades, folks have gathered in Old Fort to play and be entertained by bluegrass and old time mountain musicians. Max Woody, a well known local chair maker, is credited with starting this weekly event and still plays there each week.

The combination of Scots-Irish musical traditions and the daily routines of rural life in western North Carolina, gave way long ago to an artistic form of mountain music still practiced and enjoyed today in Old Fort. Recently, locals and visitors listened to the 1,000th performance during a weekly Friday night Old Fort Mountain Music event.

Free - every Friday at 7:00 p.m. Call 888-233-6111 or go to www.mcdowellnc.org and click on "Events" for details.

-more-

Glenn Bolick - Singer, Storyteller and Appalachian Folklore Connoisseur

www.traditionspottery.com

Glenn Bolick descended from the first Appalachian pioneers. Through his music, stories and jokes, he preserves the art of his people. Some of his talents include; Singer of ballads and traditional folk songs. Glenn is a fourth generation sawmill man and explains the growth of the business through the song. Glenn attends many storytelling festivals and performances with his music within this area. He was the recipient of the 1998 Brown-Hudson Folklore Award.

For more information, or for a cassette tape, or CD, contact: Glenn at 828.295.3862 or [E-MAIL](mailto:Glenn@traditionspottery.com) Traditions Pottery.

Mountain Music Jamming In Blowing Rock

Second Sunday of July through the last Sunday of September, 2:00 - 5:00 at

Traditions Pottery www.traditionspottery.com

This event is hosted by Glenn Bolick, it features open jam with Mountain Music, bluegrass, and gospel. Guitar, banjo, fiddle, vocals and occasional tub and washboard music. Bring your instrument, and join in or just sing along. Free.

Brevard Music Center & Paul Porter Center for the Performing Arts

Transylvania is home to two of the finest music venues in the Southeast. The Brevard Music Center is where gifted students converge to engage in a unique training experience that includes study with renowned professionals. Local residents and visitors enjoy the 80 performances that make up the Music Festival held each summer season. The Paul Porter Center for the Performing Arts at Brevard College also presents top entertainers and musicians throughout the year. www.brevard.edu.com Contact: K.C. Cronin

CRAFTS

Barn Quilt Trail – Wilkes County

The Wilkes County Quilters Guild recently completed a barn quilt project – Barn Quilt Trail. An ambitious goal of 15 barn quilts was recently completed.

Other counties in the mountains of northwestern NC have had artists paint their barn quilts on sheets of plywood that are then installed on the sides of barns and other buildings. The Guild's quilts are photos of actual quilts/quilt blocks printed in inks on two 4 x 8 ft sheets of thin pvc plastic. They are cured with ultraviolet light to prevent fading over time; lightweight, they are easily mounted onto the sides of barns with screws and washers.

Members of our Guild worked with Cultural Arts Council of Wilkes and art teacher, Ellen Royal of North Wilkes High School to develop barn quilts.

-more-

Barn Quilt Trail continued

Students were asked to paint a quilt square using one of three quilt designs: apple tree block, double wedding ring block and drunkard's path block. More than 70 students participated, along with Guild members and the director of the Cultural Arts Council, Cathy McKenzie.

To request photos of the quilts, Barn Quilt Trail brochure (with map and photos of the barns) or for more information contact: Joan Scorof, Secretary
Wilkes County Quilts: scorof@aol.com 336-984-4008.

Ben Long Fresco Trail

In the spring of 2002, Jeanie Bridges, friend of artist Benjamin F. Long, had a conversation with the executive director of the Cultural Arts Council of Wilkes, Cathy H. McKenzie, suggesting a fresco trail be created.

In the summer of 2005, Ms. McKenzie created and became the chairperson for the Benjamin F. Long Fresco Trail Consortium which included representatives from Burke, Buncombe, Iredell and Wilkes counties. The Consortium and the Trail grew to include the Ashe, Mecklenburg and Avery counties.

Benjamin F. Long, IV grew up in Statesville, NC, and studied at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Art Students' League in New York. He later lived in Florence, Italy, where he studied with master artist Pietro Annigoni and learned the art of painting frescoes. After completing several frescos in Italy, including the only painting by a non-Italian at the abbey of Montecassino, Long brought his fresco talent to America.

Since 1978, Long has completed 13 frescoes in North Carolina. His many works, created in churches and public buildings have garnered immense praise and recognition.

A grant from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area has provided the consortium to create a website, print brochures with trail locations and create educational materials to be used in schools, colleges and universities. <http://www.benlongfrescotrail.org>
Contact: K.C. Cronin

The Scenic 276 Arts And Crafts Corridor

One of the best concentrations of crafters lies along Crafter's Corridor - US 276 between Brevard and the South Carolina line. Their work can also be seen at the local #7 Arts Co-op, at shows on the Courthouse lawn and at local festivals. You'll also find independent studios offering a variety of classes and workshops.

Brochures mapping the Corridor route are available at the Visitor Center in Brevard, 175 East Main Street, Brevard, NC 28712, www.visitwaterfalls.com Contact: K.C. Cronin

Max Woody - Sixth Generation Chair Maker

Max Woody is a sixth generation chair maker from McDowell County. His great-grandfather's 19th century lathe is still used to hand craft each ladder-back chair or rocker. Max creates these works of art without using a single nail or glue of any kind and he's been doing it the same way for 59 years.

Max was born and raised in McDowell County where you can stop by his shop any day for a visit or to place your order. While he exclusively makes chairs, you may find him working away on miniature rolling pins created for small children visiting the shop.

The family tradition continues and Max has taught the trade to his two sons Myron and Carey. His sister Margaret weaves the chair seats. After she retired from a furniture plant in 1980, Max encouraged her to learn the craft. Both Max and Margaret are recognized as distinctive traditional artists by the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.

Max's shop is located on Highway 70 between Marion and Old Fort.

For more information contact: Carol Price, McDowell County TDA
828-668-4282 cprice@mcdowellnc.org

LIVING OFF THE LAND **AGRICULTURE, FISHING AND HUNTING**

History Of Fishing In The Blue Ridge Mountains

Kevin Howell of Davidson River Outfitters is currently writing a book on the heritage of fishing in the Blue Ridge Mountains. He has traced several fishing lures all the way back to the Cherokee. In his book, Kevin profiles prolific fisherman including the Howell Brothers (1970-90's), Fred Hall (1940's-70) Mark Cathy (1880's-1920), Charles Orvis (1860's) and the Cherokee Indian era (1800-1850). The book traces how mountain fishing has changed from sustenance to sport and how each skill set was passed on to the next generation. It includes the mountain history of each period – detailed and colorful stories that are quickly fading away.

Contact: Kevin Howell, Davidson River Outfitters 828-877-4181
info@davidsonflyfishing.com

Fly Fishing Trail – Jackson County

A fly-fishing trail, promoted by the Jackson County Travel and Tourism Authority, with maps and a Web site (www.flyfishingtrail.com), that spotlights 15 top fishing spots and includes information on nearby accommodations and outfitters.

-more-

Polk County Vineyards

This area has the perfect climate for growing grapes, thanks in part to the elevation and thermal belt - which moderates temperatures year-round.

In the early 1900s, Tryon was well known for its table and wine grapes. Due to prohibition, these family businesses dried up over time.

Today, a desire to preserve farmland is fueling a rebirth - there are 13 vineyards producing grapes for winemaking. Two wineries - Rock House Vineyards and Green Creek Winery are located outside Tryon, and offer tours, tastings and spots to picnic. Grapes from our vineyards go to these wineries and others in the region, including Biltmore Estate.

The only B&B on a vineyard in North Carolina is in this area - the Green River Vineyard Bed and Breakfast offers commanding views of their 5-acre vineyard, just one of many amenities. Overmountain Vineyards also offers a cabin nestled within their 10-acre vineyard.

Rock House Vineyards and Winery

First winery in Polk County. Open for tours and tastings; hosts groups and weddings. www.firstpeaknc.com/activities/details.php?gid=80&cid=5

Green Creek Winery

Creator of the world's first Red Chardonnay. Open for tours and tastings, features several large festivals each year (Day of Wine & Roses, Anniversary Festival, etc.), hosts group events. www.firstpeaknc.com/activities/details.php?gid=79&cid=5

Overmountain Vineyards

A portion of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail crosses this 10-acre vineyard and is open to the public. There is a vacation cabin for rent on the vineyard. www.firstpeaknc.com/lodging/details.php?gid=112&cid=2

Green River Vineyard Bed and Breakfast

The only B&B on a vineyard in NC. Beautiful views, 5 acres of grapes, great hospitality and comfort will sustain you during your stay.

www.firstpeaknc.com/lodging/details.php?gid=88&cid=2

Contact: Melinda Young, Director, Polk County Travel & Tourism.
828-894-2324 myoung@firstpeaknc.com www.firstpeaknc.com

Living Off The Land continued

POLK COUNTY IS HORSE COUNTRY

Tryon has a long history of equestrian pursuits – from this year’s 62nd Blockhouse Steeplechase to the nearly year-round horse events held at the Foothills Equestrian Nature Center. But you need not be a ‘horse person’ to enjoy the beauty of the green pastures surrounding the many horse estates outside of Tryon, or to marvel at the amazing union of horse and rider during a competition.

Media Contact: Melinda Young, Director, Polk County Travel & Tourism.
828-894-2324
myoung@firstpeaknc.com www.firstpeaknc.com

BLUE RIDGE SCENIC HERITAGE

Scenic Byways

The North Carolina Mountains are laced with Scenic Byways, roads so-designated by the federal government and state government for their outstanding archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. Scenic byways take travelers through National Park land, National Forests, rustic valleys and peaceful farmland to breathtaking mountain vistas, waterfalls, scenic small towns, vineyards and historic sites.

To discover the many and diverse Scenic Byways go to:

www.blueridgeheritage.com/naturalheritage/scenicbyways/index.html

Contact: K.C. Cronin

Blue Ridge Parkway

The Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited unit of America's National Park Service system and perhaps the most famous scenic byways in the North Carolina mountains. Built during the Depression, the road was designed from the outset to be a meandering drive through the Appalachians from Virginia to Western North Carolina. Frequent turnouts, hiking trailheads and picnic spots give travelers ample opportunity to fully enjoy the beauty of the mountains. The Parkway will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2010 - www.blueridgeparkway75.org

Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center

For the first time in its 73-year history, the Blue Ridge Parkway has a visitor center that represents its entire length, from the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in western North Carolina.

Opened in 2007, the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center was developed as a partnership between the National Park Service and the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area to promote the preservation and enjoyment of the region’s unique natural and cultural resources and to promote economic development in keeping with those goals.

-more-

Blue Ridge Visitor Center continued

The Visitor Center features innovative, high-tech interactive exhibits, and the building itself reflects cutting edge energy-saving technology. Awarded the Gold LEED® certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the building features active/passive heating and cooling, radiant floor heating, a “green” roof and other energy efficient features.

This is the first National Park Service visitor center in the country to offer an I-Wall, a 22-foot interactive map of the entire Parkway which provides multi-media information on places to visit on and near the Parkway. Other exhibits highlight the natural and cultural diversity, economic traditions, and recreational opportunities found in western North Carolina and along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Visitor Center also houses a 70-seat theater featuring a new film, “The Blue Ridge Parkway-America’s Favorite Journey.” Shown in high-definition surround sound (similar to the I-MAX experience), the 24-minute film captures a father-daughter motorcycle trip along the Parkway that incorporates Parkway history and the region’s cultural and natural sights and sounds.

Information desks are staffed by National Park Service and Blue Ridge National Heritage Area employees and volunteers who will help visitors plan their travel along the Parkway’s 469-mile long motor road and throughout the Blue Ridge region.

In addition, the Center serves as the headquarters for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. Established by Congress in November, 2003, this organization recognizes and celebrates the natural abundance and richly varied cultural history of the North Carolina mountains and is charged with the preservation, interpretation, and development of heritage resources in the 25 westernmost counties in the state and the Quallah Boundary.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited unit of the National Park Service, with 20 million visitors each year. For more information and directions go to www.blueridgeheritage.com or call the Visitor Center: 828-298-5330.
Contact: K.C. Cronin

National Parks

North Carolina is home to the two most-visited National Parks in the country:

- Blue Ridge Parkway – 252 miles of scenic roadway winding through the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park – a half million+ acre park renowned for its biodiversity, old growth forests, historic farm sites and abundant recreation opportunities.

-more-

National Parks continued

The North Carolina mountains also feature a National Historic Site and National Historic Trail administered by the National Park Service:

- Carl Sandburg Home – a 264-acre farm in Flat Rock, NC which was home to the esteemed author and poet.

Contact: K.C. Cronin

North Carolina State Parks and Forests

The six North Carolina State Parks, two State Forests and the vast Green River Game Lands in the North Carolina mountains protect spectacular natural landmarks and provide outstanding recreational opportunities. These North Carolina State Parks and forests are popular destinations for hiking, camping, picnicking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, fishing, boating and swimming.

Many offer special events, including educational and interpretive programs, organized hikes, concerts, fishing lessons, and environmental workshops.

State Parks

- Lake James State Park - near Marion, NC
- Mount Jefferson State Park – between Jefferson and West Jefferson, NC
- Mount Mitchell State Park – off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Burnsville, NC
- New River State Park – near Jefferson, NC
- Pilot Mountain State Park – Pinnacle, NC
- South Mountains State Park – Connelly Springs, NC
- Stone Mountain State Park – Roaring Gap, NC

State Forests

- DuPont State Forest – between Hendersonville and Brevard, NC
- Holmes Educational State Forest - Hendersonville, NC

Other State Lands

- Green River Game Lands (Green River Gorge) – near Hendersonville, NC

For details go to:

www.blueridgeheritage.com/naturalheritage/stateparksandforests/index.html

Contact: K.C. Cronin

National Forests

The two National Forests in NC are some of the earliest forests to be protected by the US government and are among the most biodiverse. Pisgah National Forest, the country's first National Forest, was the site of the first forestry school and the early history of forest conservation. The Nantahala National Forest is distinguished by its spectacular whitewater, waterfalls, old growth and the Scenic Byways that pass through it.

-more-

National Forests continued

Together the two National Forests offer visitors over a million acres of protected landscape for an abundance of recreational pursuits – hiking, camping, picnicking, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, boating, fishing, birding, mountain biking, horseback riding and much more. For details go to:

www.blueridgeheritage.com/naturalheritage/nationalforests/index.html

Contact: K.C. Cronin

Appalachian Trail

Hikers of every degree of skill will find appropriate challenges along the 88 miles of the Appalachian Trail (AT) that run through the North Carolina mountains. From through-hikers—backpackers who attempt the trail in its entirety—to hikers out for an afternoon stroll, those who love to walk rugged mountain terrain through dense woodlands find the Appalachian Trail among the most beautiful in America.

For access information on AT trails go to:

www.blueridgeheritage.com/NaturalHeritage/AppalachianTrail/index.html

Contact: K.C. Cronin

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail

In October, Crescent Communities on Lake James will complete a link in the chain of a historic journey that dates back to the Revolutionary War.

The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVNHT) is a 330-mile corridor given its historic designation by President Jimmy Carter in 1980. The OVNHT is the first [National Historic Trail](#) established within the eastern United States and traces the route of the Overmountain Men militia as they marched across the Blue Ridge to defeat the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain – one of the turning points of the war.

Over the past three years, Crescent has worked with the National Park Service create 3.5 miles of new pathways on the OVNHT. The first mile was certified in 2006. This October, the National Park Service will certify the remaining 2.5 miles of pathways.

The new segment of the OVNHT wanders through Crescent's 1780 community, which is named after the year of the Overmountain Men's march and connects to Lake James State Park. It will eventually connect the 1780 community to the Pisgah National Forest and the 935-mile Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The new pathways are open to the public.

Mike Reed, Crown Communications

704.632.4794 Fax: 704.376.2537 mreed@crow-com.com

Wild and Rugged

Following a long, narrow dirt road along Wilson Creek, you'll find one of North Carolina's most unknown rugged areas. Wilson Creek, a 23.3-mile mountain stream, starts atop the 5920-foot high Grandfather Mountain, just 100 yards above the Blue Ridge Parkway. Twenty miles later, the headwaters rush through the Blue Ridge Mountains into a 200-foot deep gorge of granite bedrock. Wilson Creek was added to the National Wild and Scenic River System in 2000, and much of it lies in the Pisgah National Forest. From its boulder-strewn headwaters, kayakers plunge through rapids with names like Boatbuster and Thunderhole in what is recognized as one of the most challenging runs in the southeastern United States. Twenty-five miles of wilderness trails offer hikers and backpackers striking views of small waterfalls and forests intertwined with laurel and rhododendron. Pristine trout waters are pursued by avid fishermen while mountain bikers find single-track systems creating opportunities for all abilities. Thirty-four miles of trails are open to all-terrain and off-highway vehicles in the Brown Mountain Off-Highway Vehicle Area. If you're seeking the ultimate outdoor transformational experience, take a trip to Wilson Creek.

www.explore Caldwell.com

Valley Virtues

Following the Yadkin River Valley through green hills and a rolling countryside, you'll find Historic Happy Valley, a rural community in northeast Caldwell County dotted with historic sites, old barns, and plowed fields. Its history is rich with stories of Daniel Boone and Tom Dooly, the area's best-known resident thanks to the Kingston Trio's song "The Ballad of Tom Dooley."

Revolutionary hero and statesman General William Lenoir came to build his homestead in the area, and the Overmountain Men, on their way to battle at Kings Mountain in 1780, used the dirt road that still exists in some places. Thirteen sites in the Valley are on the National Register of Historic Places, including The Patterson School Historic District which is only one of two rural historic districts in North Carolina. Many of the families of the Valley who have roots dating back to the early 1700s still practice traditions of their ancestors, like canning, quilting, woodworking and molasses boiling. Art and tourism groups have taken notice of Happy Valley. These groups are working to preserve the area's heritage before it's too late. Folklorists have spent the past two years documenting the Valley's people and culture. These groups hope to use resources gathered by folklorists to create an iPod audio driving tour along N.C. 268, the main road through the Valley.

Green River – Polk County

Just a quarter mile hike through a pristine nature preserve will bring you to the 90-foot Pearson's Falls. Other hiking trails range from easy, paved trails to 6-mile mountainous treks through a pristine watershed area.

The Green River, internationally known by kayakers for its Class I-V rapids, has three sections rated at different levels for tubing, kayaking and canoeing, plus fishing and swimming. Green River Adventures, a new kayaking school, and several tubing businesses provide the equipment and shuttle service.

Expansion of Lake James State Park

The State of North Carolina is in the process of expanding Lake James State Park to nearly five times its original size, giving the public even more opportunities to enjoy the outdoors at one of the most scenic mountain lakes in North Carolina. The park was established in 1987 with the purchase of 605 acres, and Crescent Resources, LLC worked with state officials to expand the park by almost 3,000 acres. This preserves more than 40 acres of the lake's 150 miles of shoreline in perpetuity.

Aside from lake access and the chance to boat and swim in Lake James' clear waters, the park is a great place for picnics. It also has miles of hiking trails for enjoying nature and wildlife. The groundbreaking for the new portion of the park is scheduled for October.

The addition, which is next to Crescent's 1780 community, will open the north shore of Lake James to the public and preserve this area for years to come. The park and the 1780 community will also feature new pathways on the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVNHT). The 3.5 mile portion of the OVNHT is complete and will be certified by the National Park Service this fall.

Contact: Mike Reed, Crown Communications

Phone: 704.632.4794 Fax: 704.376.2537 mreed@crowm-com.com

Chimney Rock Park – Chimney Rock, NC

Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park is North Carolina's answer to the perfect mountain getaway. The Park, located 25 miles southeast of Asheville, North Carolina, offers the best of the mountains in one place-spectacular 75-mile views, hiking trails for all ages, a 404-foot waterfall, a variety of special events and much more.

From atop Chimney Rock, an ancient monolith at an elevation of 2280ft, guests can see as far as King's Mountain, more than 75 miles away across the Blue Ridge and the Carolina Piedmont. The Park's 26-story elevator, built inside the mountain, makes it easy to access the views. Unique hiking trails offer guests the opportunity to reconnect with nature.

-more-

Chimney Rock Park continued

Along with the Chimney, the Park's other star attraction is 404ft Hickory Nut Falls, one of the tallest waterfalls east of the Mississippi River. Plus, visitors can get up close and personal with the waterfall feeling its cool mist as it tumbles down the rock face.

Open year-round and pet-friendly, Chimney Rock is a North Carolina treasure that's fun for the whole family. Five hiking trails help guests discover the secret gems of Chimney Rock. The family-friendly Great Woodland Adventure is a whimsical journey past locally-made, larger-than-life sculptures. Grady the Groundhog, the Park's mascot, is the trail guide and he's happy to share lots of information about his animal friends who call the Park home. The Hickory Nut Falls trail rewards hikers with the full dramatic view of 404ft Hickory Nut Falls. With some of Chimney Rock's most unique geologic formations – the Opera Box and Devil's Head – the Skyline trail features spectacular views of Hickory Nut Gorge and Lake Lure. Hiking is great exercise, and the Park's Four Seasons trail is sure to get hearts pumping with a climb of more than 400ft. The Outcroppings trail, an alternative to the elevator, offers the chance to view the Park's unique geology up close like the Subway, Grotto, Rock Pile and Moonshiner's Cave.

Contact: Meghan Rogers, prandevents@chimneyrockpark.com 828-625-9611, ext. 816

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

Cherokee, N.C., is home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, a culture rich in history dating back more than 11,000 years. Nearly a half million tourists journey to Cherokee each year to enjoy the legendary hospitality, living culture, rich tradition of art, and ancient history of the people known as the Ani-kituhwa-gi.

Unlike many great cultures of the ancient past, the Eastern Band of Cherokee has survived physically, culturally, and spiritually. Today they occupy their original homelands on the 100-square-mile Qualla Boundary, nestled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the southern entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway. There is a thriving culture, alive with rich customs that honor, preserve, and in some cases resurrect, age-old traditions such as dance, basket weaving, and pottery. A visit to Cherokee is like a treasure hunt...full of unexpected delights like colorful powwows, music and dance festivals, classic car shows, arts and crafts demonstrations, plus attractions that educate and entertain visitors such as the Oconaluftee Indian Village, "Unto These Hills" outdoor drama, and the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.

The Museum chronicles Cherokee history and features an award-winning permanent exhibit, and the renowned "Emissaries of Peace" exhibit, which chronicles a peaceful 1762 encounter between the British and the Cherokee.

-more-

Cherokee continued

Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, “Emissaries of Peace” received a presidential designation as a “We the People” exhibit. “Emissaries” was viewed by over 3 million visitors while at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in 2007. It is the only traveling exhibition produced by members of an American Indian tribe.

The Museum also houses a gift shop with an extensive book collection, Emissaries’ collectibles, Native American music, pottery, specialty souvenirs and more.

The legendary story of the Cherokee’s triumphs and tribulations can be seen outside under the stars at night in the poignant drama “Unto These Hills...a retelling”. The play is a narrative account of the Eastern Band of Cherokee’s history, from the arrival of the Europeans and the forced exile along the Trail of Tears in 1838–39, to the ultimate revival of tribal life and tradition that survives today. The third longest running outdoor drama in the nation features native performers, live music, ritual dance, and authentic Cherokee costumes, set onstage in a 2,800-seat mountainside amphitheater. Since its inaugural debut in 1950, over 5 million visitors have attended the memorable drama.

Since 1952, visitors have been traveling back in time to experience the Cherokee way of life, circa 1750, at the Oconaluftee Indian Village - a live working Indian village. While on tour, visitors will see residents in native dress involved in numerous activities - many still practiced today - such as canoe hulling, preparing cornbread, arrowhead knapping, mask making, pottery, storytelling, basket weaving, beading, and other native skills. Local clay, wood, stone, white oak, and other natural materials are used to create handcrafted works of art using age-old techniques. The living exhibits demonstrate that the Cherokee were responsible stewards of the beloved land of their ancestors and used it wisely. There was little waste of natural resources in producing items needed for daily living, and reciprocity (giving back when something was used) was the custom. While at the Village Square, don’t miss traditional Cherokee dances being performed - like the friendship, quail and bear dances. Live performances take place on Monday, Wed. and Friday at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Arts and crafts lovers can learn to create handcrafted works of art like the Cherokee masters. The Village offers “Hands-on Cherokee” pottery, basket weaving, and beading classes, where Cherokee craftsman teach techniques thousands of years old. For those who prefer to just purchase their treasures, Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual Co-op is a wonderful place to shop for unique gifts. Featuring traditional and contemporary crafts and fine art by over 300 potters, painters, basket weavers, wood carvers, and other Eastern Band artisans, Qualla is one of the oldest and most prestigious co-ops of its kind in the nation. The gallery presents the works of many award-winning, nationally acclaimed Native American artists.

Cherokee continued

In efforts to sustain the land, as well as the arts and culture of the people, Cherokee also boasts historic hiking trails, waterfalls, botanical gardens, campgrounds, Oconaluftee Islands Park swimming and picnic area, and stocked streams open to the public.

Each year the Cherokee Fish and Game Enterprise stocks thirty miles of fast-flowing streams on the Qualla Boundary with nearly 400,000 speckled, rainbow and brown trout grown at the tribe's own trout farm. The Trout season in North Carolina actually opens in Cherokee and runs from April through to the following February.

For those seeking to connect with nature, a quiet respite can be found across a small swirling stream, at the mile-long nature trail located next to the Oconaluftee Village. The mossy trail, lined with mixed pine and hardwood forest, is home to the Botanical Garden, planted with one hundred and fifty of the more than 800 indigenous plants, herbs and flowers once used by the Cherokee for food, medicine, and ancient healing remedies. In the Botanical Garden, you'll hear legends and storytelling by Cherokee Elders - like the story of Cherokee creation: how the Water Beetle formed the Earth. For the Cherokee, this land has always been at the center, the source of sustenance, solace and celebration. When you come and explore – sit and soak it all in, and become one with this place, you'll discover why.

Historic Cherokee is dotted with iconic roadside motels beckoning a bygone era, open-air markets, antique shops, the picturesque River Walk shopping district, small country cafes, arts & crafts galleries, and novelty gift shops. This scenic region is home to more than 20 annual events that celebrate Native American traditions while providing an enriching and inspirational history lesson for visitors. Upcoming fall events include the 96th Annual Cherokee Indian Fair, Oct. 7-11, Big Rigs Antique Truck show, Oct. 17-19, Qualla Open Air Indian Art Market, October 18 and "Cruise the Smokies" Fall Cherokee Road Run, Oct. 31-Nov.2 .

Cherokee, N.C., was the 2006 Travel Attraction of the Year as named by the Southeast Tourism Society. For more information about Cherokee and for [Discount ticket packages](#) and hotel accommodations, please visit www.cherokee-nc.com or call 800.438.1601.

Contact: For photos, stories or interviews, media outlets should contact The Goss Agency, 828.259.9910, Ext. 110, pr@thegossagency.com.

