Our Partners

We can only accomplish our important work through coalitions and partnerships. Blue Ridge Conservancy thanks the following partners for their help in protecting the land and water resources of the Blue Ridge.

- Our many generous private donors
- Blue Ridge Forever coalition and local land trust partners
- Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation
- The Conservation Fund
- Conservation Trust for North Carolina
- Land Trust Alliance
- Foundation for the Carolinas
- Helen M. Clabough Charitable Foundation
- Park Foundation
- Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Department of Agriculture Plant Conservation Program
- North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund
- North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund
- North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
- North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- North Carolina State Parks
- North Carolina Department of Transportation

A private, non-profit, non-governmental organization serving Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey Counties.

www.blueridgeconservancy.org
In 2010 two of northwestern North Carolina’s prominent land trusts joined forces to create Blue Ridge Conservancy (BRC). With the merger of Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust and High Country Conservancy, a new nonprofit land conservancy was established with the mission of protecting the natural resources of northwestern North Carolina by conserving land with significant agricultural, ecological, cultural, recreational or scenic value. To date, BRC has protected over 15,000 acres in 153 places.

Blue Ridge Conservancy is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization incorporated in North Carolina and serving Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey Counties. We are dedicated to protecting important conservation land as efficiently as possible. For example, our merger resulted in an annual administrative savings of $100,000. That means more money for protecting the places we all love.

The following pages contain a portfolio of our many successful conservation projects, divided as they relate to BRC’s overall mission. You will see examples of our many protected farms, state parks, natural areas, culturally significant properties, and properties that have been protected specifically for their scenic value.

And as you look at what BRC has accomplished please remember that protecting our land begins with you, our donors and supporters. Blue Ridge Conservancy is your “local” land trust. Our staff and Board of Trustees are your neighbors and we live and work in the areas we protect. That makes a world of difference!

So come by for a visit. Our office is located at:
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Photo courtesy Eric Heistand / ericheistand.com
Blackburn-Vannoy Farm  
*Ashe County, 369 Acres*

Permanently protected by a BRC conservation easement, this historic farm includes forests, pasture, and two farm houses built in the 1880s. The property will host the new location of Appalachian State University’s Sustainable Development Program’s teaching and research farm.  This will create an exciting opportunity for BRC to work closely with ASU to help draw the connection between land conservation, education, local food and agriculture.

Mountain Farm  
*Yancey County, 24 acres*

A thriving agri-tourism destination, this small family farm is renowned across the state for successfully growing lavender, an ingredient used for everything from soap to seasonings in Asheville’s restaurant kitchens. In addition to lavender, Mountain Farm offers pick-your-own blueberries, a goat dairy, gift shop and farm tours. BRC’s conservation easement on the property conserves valuable farmland and helps protect the water quality of the South Toe River.

Huber Family Farm  
*Alleghany County, 165 acres*

Often referred to as “The Little Farm,” the Huber Family Farm is a model for agricultural conservation and restoration activities. With support from the National Resources Conservation Service, the farm’s owner is leading the way in restoring the banks of Brush Creek and Little Pine Creek. Also, by instituting agricultural Best Management Practices such as fencing cattle and horses from the streams and installing livestock watering wells, the farm’s owner is protecting water quality for future generations.

Robinson Family Farm  
*Ashe County, 55 acres*

BRC’s conservation of this historic family farm protects valuable farmland, streams and a biologically significant wetland seep. Protection of the farm was made possible with help from the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and the Helen M. Clabough Foundation. The property is currently used for growing hay and grazing cattle.

Long Ridge Farms  
*Watauga County, 130 acres*

This family-owned Christmas tree farm is situated above the Watauga River near historic Valle Crucis. BRC’s conservation easement protects a thriving farm, along with excellent plant and wildlife habitat.
Beech Creek Bog
State Natural Area
Watauga County, 120 acres
BRC led the way in protecting this Significant Natural Heritage Area. Created in 2002, the bog represents the first example of a southern Appalachian bog in the N.C. State Parks system. Unlike northern bogs of glacial origin, southern Appalachian bogs form in poorly drained depressions or on gentle slopes. Beech Creek Bog is noteworthy because both the bog and the surrounding watershed show very little disturbance and contain natural communities of excellent quality. Sitting at an elevation of 4,000 feet, this nationally significant natural area supports a large population of the rare bog clubmoss as well as other unusual species.

Bear Paw State Natural Area
Watauga County, 355 acres
BRC led the land acquisition effort and partnered with the State of N.C. to create the new Bear Paw State Natural Area. Managed by State Parks, Bear Paw is located on Hanging Rock Ridge, a Significant Natural Heritage Area. Important natural communities with rare and threatened plant species are located within this nationally significant area.

Pond Mountain
Ashe County, 1,793 acres
Named by Thomas Jefferson’s father while surveying the Virginia-North Carolina border, Pond Mountain received its name from the unusual natural ponds that dotted its high ridge. BRC led the way in protecting this ecologically and culturally significant area perched at an elevation of 5,000 feet. Currently under Christmas tree cultivation, the project offers major environmental benefits by presenting an opportunity to restore a high mountain habitat to a thriving natural area. Pond Mountain also connects with the Cherokee National Forest which adds to a large contiguous area important for wildlife habitat. Finally, the property contains the headwaters for Big Laurel Creek, Big Horse Creek and Little Horse Creek, enhancing and protecting local and regional water quality. Beyond ecological benefits, the area will offer passive recreational opportunities such as horseback riding and hiking.

Moses Cone Old Growth Forest
Watauga County, 60 acres
Part of a Significant Natural Heritage Area, this tract adjoins the Blue Ridge Parkway’s Moses Cone Memorial Park. Through two land conservation projects, BRC has protected old-growth forest, wildlife habitat and headwater tributaries for the New River. In 2008, BRC donated a 21-acre portion of these protected lands to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

High Haven
Avery County, 100 acres
Through a donated conservation easement, this BRC project protects a globally imperiled Southern Appalachian bog containing rare plant and animal species. The project also protects the water quality of the North Toe River, a water supply for the mountain community of Spruce Pine.
Whippoorwill Academy
Wilkes County, 317 acres
Home of the historic Whippoorwill Village and Academy, this beautiful 331-acre farm has been in the same family for over 200 years. Rich with culture and history, the property contains a portion of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, as well as 1.5 miles of frontage on both the Yadkin River and the Upper Yadkin Way Scenic Byway. The farm hosts a variety of historical attractions including a farmhouse built in 1877, a collection of late 19th century buildings open to the public as Whippoorwill Academy and the Tom Dooley Museum. The farm also hosts the annual Daniel Boone Day. BRC led the protection of the Whippoorwill Village and the historic farm under a grant from the N.C. Scenic Byways Lands Conservation Initiative, and in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and the Conservation Trust for N.C.

Old Orchard Creek Farm
Ashe County, 87 acres
Old Orchard Creek is a historic, artisanal Appalachian blueberry and apple farm. This beautiful cove farm is on the National Register of Historic Places and is protected by a conservation easement donated to BRC. The farm is home to a restored 1880s farmhouse and numerous historic farm buildings. Old Orchard Creek was protected in partnership with the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and is a model for agricultural Best Management Practices. In 2010, the farm received an award from Preservation North Carolina for landscape protection.

Valle Crucis
Watauga County, 1,057 acres
From the Mast General Store to the Valle Country Fair, Valle Crucis is an area rich with history and culture—so rich that North Carolina deemed the entire community the state’s first “Rural Historic District.” The area contains multi-generational family farms and National Register of Historic Places’ sites like the Valle Crucis Episcopal Mission, Mast Store and Mast Farm Inn. It’s also an area rich in biological diversity, with four places of significant natural heritage, including Bear Paw State Natural Area. Protecting the natural and cultural heritage of Valle Crucis remains a top priority for BRC.
Protecting and Creating Recreational Opportunities

YMCA Camp Harrison
Wilkes County, 712 acres
Thanks to a BRC conservation easement protecting 712 acres in the Brushy Mountains, children from across North Carolina can continue to renew their connection with the outdoors at Camp Harrison, a YMCA summer camp. With no state parks, game lands or other large protected tracts in the Brushies, this property constitutes the largest area of protected land in the Brushy Mountains.

Elk Knob State Park
Ashe and Watauga Counties, 530 acres
By helping expand Elk Knob State Park, BRC has assisted North Carolina in creating additional recreational opportunities while protecting the region’s important natural resources. Part of the amphibolite mountain group, an unusual mountain chain containing a calcium-rich rock rare in the southern Blue Ridge, Elk Knob and its surrounding mountain peaks support an enormous variety of rare plant and animal life. The New River, an American Heritage River and one of the oldest rivers in the world, also originates on Elk Knob.

Three Top Mountain Game Lands
Ashe County, 108 acres
Named for its three prominent rock outcroppings, Three Top Mountain supports a variety of recreational opportunities, as well as a rich ecology and abundant wildlife. Hunters can take advantage of a nearly 3,000-acre game land, hikers will find rugged trails and hidden waterfalls, and in the spring birders can enjoy nesting songbirds like the rose-breasted grosbeak. BRC helped expand the game land and assisted the state in adding a new recreational access area.

Valle Crucis Community Park
Watauga County
Bordering the Watauga River behind Mast General Store, Valle Crucis Community Park is an immensely popular community resource. To protect open space, as well as the Watauga River’s water quality, BRC accepted a donated conservation easement on the park’s riparian corridor.

J. Douglas Williams Park
Sugar Mountain, Avery County, 14 acres
The J. Douglas Williams Park on Sugar Mountain is the result of an inspired grassroots fundraising effort on the part of the Sugar Mountain Community Association. The conservation easement on this public park provides environmental and scenic protection for forests, wildlife habitat as well as recreational and educational opportunities. The park includes a picnic and restroom facility, as well as three nature trails.
Blue Ridge Parkway, Meadow Creek and Koontz Farm, 374 acres

Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2010, the Blue Ridge Parkway is America’s most visited national park. By showcasing the natural wonder and beauty of the Blue Ridge, the Parkway contributes billions of tourism dollars to North Carolina’s economy. Working with partners like the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, and others, BRC has protected thousands of acres of land along the Parkway, forever preserving the amazing views that attract millions of visitors year after year. Pictured is the Meadow Creek conservation easement in Alleghany County. This easement, along with the nearby Koontz Farm, protects 374 acres of scenic Parkway views.

Bullhead Mountain State Natural Area

Alleghany County, 229 acres

Known among birders as a prime spot for watching the hawk migration, Bullhead Mountain also forms a beautiful and significant portion of the mountain scenery along the Blue Ridge Parkway. BRC’s work at Bullhead Mountain forever protects this Natural Area’s scenic beauty for hikers, bird enthusiasts and Blue Ridge Parkway visitors.

Howards Knob

Watauga County, 46 acres

Since BRC’s beginnings, Howards Knob has inspired important community conservation efforts. Thanks to a BRC conservation easement, a major portion of Howards Knob’s southern slope is protected from development forever. This 46-acre natural area permanently protects headwater streams, plant and animal life, as well as a significant piece of scenic beauty for the town of Boone.

Mission Crossing Byway, NC Highway 194

Avery and Watauga Counties, 123 acres

The N.C. Department of Transportation created Scenic Byways to highlight the beauty of the Tarheel state, and to raise awareness for the preservation of its special places. In BRC’s seven county region, there are five Scenic Byways, including Mission Crossing. This byway includes Highway 194 from Avery County along the Elk River, through Banner Elk and Valle Crucis ending in Vilas. On Mission Crossing’s western end, two BRC projects protect 123 acres of farms and fields, forests and streams, and the Byway’s scenic beauty, forever. Pictured is the Oliver Hill easement.