

Thursday, Sept. 7, 1989

## Who Owns The Mountains?



— Staff Photo By STEVE DIXON

A Skidder Drags A Log Toward A Loader/Bucksaw In Pisgah National Forest

# Government Plays Important Role In Development Of Mountain Lands

■ Fifth in a Series

By CLARKE MORRISON  
Staff Writer

Finished in 1828, the Buncombe Turnpike opened the gates north and south to a beautiful and rugged region.

The highway had a swift and permanent impact on much of Western North Carolina. Never again would it be so pristine and so wild.

Settlers seeking opportunity and isolation flocked to the "land of the sky."

That long-ago decision by the state Legislature to build the road linking the mountains with populated areas in South Carolina and Tennessee was similar to many others made by lawmakers. Whether it's locating major traffic corridors, buying and managing public lands, promoting industrialization or regulating pollution, government has great power to plot the course of development.

A more recent initiative is the planned upgrade of U.S. 23 to interstate standards. Public officials clamoring for the project, estimated to cost nearly \$100 million, say it's needed to open Western North Carolina to the heavily populated Ohio



### Public Vistas, Private Rights

Valley with its tourists and industrial prospects.

Others, like John Hill, question the long-held official assumption that "growth is good." Hill is among a group of Ox Creek residents who became furious when they learned about a Department of Transportation map proposing a four-lane highway through their tranquil community.

"People should be asked if they want to change the nature of their communities to compete with Atlanta," said Hill, a retired investment broker who moved here from New Orleans two years ago.

"More malls, more sprawling plants, more interstate highways, more jammed-up subdivisions, more urban blight, more unemployment — find me a major city that has experi-

enced growth, and show me those problems don't exist," Hill said.

Timber sales forester Smith Nicholls and logging engineer Tom Campbell remember a time not so long ago when their jobs with the U.S. Forest Service were looked upon as just part of the mountain tradition of providing raw materials for the needs of business and industry.

How things have changed in a few short years.

A law put on the books in 1976 allowed public input for the first time into the way national forests are managed. What once was the calm and exclusive domain of the professional is now fraught with conflict.

"Twenty years ago the people you worked with understood logging," Campbell said. "With the population buildup in Western North Carolina, people are more interested in things like recreation, summer homes and scenic vistas.

"People have a whole set of needs, a whole set of wants and desires on how they want the land managed than the previous people did, and we now have two groups who are in conflict."

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# Who Owns The Mountains?

## Government

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This conflict — how much timber should be cut and by what method, what areas should be designated wilderness, how much protection wildlife needs, whether herbicides should be used — illustrates the special responsibility and scrutiny that comes with government ownership of the land.

The federal and state governments own more than a fourth of Western North Carolina. The Pisgah and Nantahala national forests cover more than a million acres.

Other hot potatoes that fall within the public realm range from

highways to landfills and waste disposal to management philosophies toward natural areas.

And government often has the power to "lead" development in such ways as deciding the location of major traffic corridors that inevitably spur growth, or designating forest regions as wilderness, effectively barring their use for timber forever.

In April, a group opposed to clear-cutting trees on the region's national forests paraded a petition the length of three football fields through downtown Asheville. It contained more than 16,000 signatures collected by volunteers over the preceeding three months. Some Western North Carolina counties don't have that many people.

Clear-cutting is the controversial harvesting technique of cutting down and removing all the trees on tracts of about 25 acres. The Forest Service maintains that this is the most efficient way of harvesting timber and growing back quality hardwoods. Conservationists say it's bad for recreation, wildlife and scenic beauty.

"This is not an issue that's been stirred up by a small number of environmentalists," said protest organ-

izer Mary Kelly. "People in every holler are concerned about clear-cutting."

And the growing importance of public forums hasn't been lost with loggers and mill operators who resent restrictions on where they can log in the national forests.

In July a mile-long caravan of logging trucks led by a rig dangling effigies of the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club rolled through Robbinsville. The loggers are opposed to efforts by conservation groups to limit timber cutting near Cheoah Bald, an area bisected by the Appalachian Trail.

And timber industry leaders don't think much of a recent publication by the Wilderness Society titled "Mountain Treasures at Risk: The Future of the Southern Appalachian National Forests." The report criticizes Forest Service plans to double logging over the next decade in six national forests in the Southeast.

The increased logging is particularly galling, the report says, because it is costing the taxpayers millions of dollars, and the costliest timber sales are also the most environmentally damaging due to the steep terrain on

which they occur. A Forest Service study showed that timber sales on the Pisgah-Nantahala lost \$2.5 million in 1988.

"These national forests are part of one of the richest centers of biological diversity in the country," said Peter Kirby of the society. "Yet the forest service is systematically planning to foul our own biological nest with its timber-dominated plans."

The report urges the Forest Service to expand wilderness areas and halt all logging and road building in areas being considered for wilderness designation.

The seeds for public involvement in how government forests should be managed were sown with the 1976 passage of the National Forest Management Act, which required detailed plans for each forest and the opportunity for public comment, said Bjorn Dahl, supervisor of the National Forests in North Carolina.

Deciding how the forests should be managed is "one of the greatest social experiments in the world today," Dahl said. "We have seen a big change in public attitude."

However, the region's timber industry says it is becoming increasingly dependent on government trees as development gobbles up the private timber base.

Ironically, a slack demand for government timber sales can be attributed in part to the attractiveness of private sales on land where the trees won't be regrown, Dahl said.

Loggers and mill operators say

the Forest Service must offer more and better quality timber or the industry will suffer severely.

"It's our only salvation," said Charles Woodard, director of the Southern Appalachian Multiple Use Council, a timber industry group. "Here in Western North Carolina, we're just being backed into a corner."

Woodard and others say that more and more of the land is being bought by retirees and individuals from out of state and many of these landowners don't want to part with their trees.

"The guy from Florida that buys the old 100-acre farm, he splits it into lots and sells it off or else he builds a weekend retreat, and he won't sell you a log," Woodard said. "Then you have roads, golf courses, all sorts of development to decrease the acreage."

The fifth survey of the state's national forests, completed by the Forest Service in 1984, showed that 115,000 acres were lost over the previous 10 years to residential and industrial development and agriculture. Woodard believes the pace has quickened in the five years since the study.

"When the first house is built on it, it's effectively removed from the timber base," said Randy Denman, a forester at Powell Industries in Maggie Valley. "We are in a very beautiful and enjoyable area, and because of that people are hesitant to sell their timber."

Meanwhile, a 1982 Forest Service study projected demand for hardwoods, for which the Southern Appalachians are renowned, to grow nearly 50 percent by the turn of the century.

Although timber sales from national forests account for less than 5 percent of the total supply in North Carolina, the state's six westernmost counties rely on government forests for a third of their supply. Another third comes from private lands in the region, and the rest is bought out of state.

"The flow of national forest timber is extremely important in these six western counties," Dahl said. "The basic mainstay of the economy is the wood products industry. The question is whether we can maintain our historic output with a significantly reduced land base."

Perhaps the region's most famous federal property, the Blue Ridge Parkway, has experienced a soaring popularity. The number of visits to the 470-mile scenic highway over the past decade has increased from 14 million to 25.5 million last year.

Parkway Superintendent Gary Everhardt believes this growing use, along with environmental problems and development, poses a serious threat.

"I don't think there is any question from all the surveys that the No. 1 reason people come here is the visual outdoor experience," Everhardt said. "And once you blight that with all of these things, is there any reason to come back? It's a big question, and we're concerned about it. But I don't know if we have many answers."

"Certainly the more visitors you have the more wear and tear you have on your facilities. And in a sense, we are wearing out the natural environment — what God put here."

Everhardt finds hope with the increasing public concern over the state of the environment, a sort of stewardship view that: "I might own the land, but really I'm going to be here only a short period of time."

What to do with garbage promises to be one of the biggest environmental and economic problems facing county governments during the last decade of this century.

Because landfills of the past have been shown to leak dangerous substances into ground and surface waters, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has imposed tough new standards for landfills intended to prevent such pollution.

Studies estimate that capital costs for a new 100-acre landfill with a 20-year life expectancy may exceed \$9 million, with the required liners and leachate collection systems. That doesn't include \$400,000 annual operating costs.

It also doesn't include the purchase of the land, perhaps the most volatile issue because local officials are forced to choose a site, always to the anger of those nearby who fear the accompanying traffic, decrease in land values and other problems.

More than a third of landfills in the state will run out of room by 1993, according to the solid waste branch of the Department of Human Resources. Of the state's 17 westernmost counties, 10 will run out of space in their landfills within the next five years, three of them within the next two years.

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# Population Influx Changes Face Of WNC

■ *Seventh in a Series*

By **BOB SCOTT**

Western Bureau

For 30 years, Mabel Kitchens has tracked the comings and goings of mountain people in her column in the Clay County Progress newspaper in Hayesville.

There's no question that the face of Western North Carolina is changing, she says.

"It used to be you could sit on the square and know 8 of 10 people who went down the sidewalk. And now if I know one in 15, I'm real lucky," the 72-year-old widow of



Public Vistas, Private Rights

former Clay County Sheriff Neal Kitchens said recently at her rural home outside Hayesville.

In almost all of the 19 counties in Western North Carolina the 1970s and '80s have been marked by significant population growth.

As a whole the area grew about 25 percent, but many areas have outpaced those figures — Henderson County's 1987 population of 67,966 is almost twice its 1960 population (36,163), and Macon County has grown 47 percent since 1970. Only one county, Avery, had a population decline and that was in the period of 1970 to 1980.

But the population also has changed in character, driven in part by a large in-migration of retirees and others seeking refuge from the cities. A diversifying economy and growing medical community also has

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## Changes

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brought executives, professionals and other skilled people from across the country to Western North Carolina.

Moreover, improvements in education, communications and opportunities have brought changes for the "homegrown" population.

### ■ Retirees

The influx of retirees is one of the most apparent changes in the mountain population, producing some interesting statistics and reactions. For example, despite population increases, the public school enrollment has declined by nearly 10,000 from 1980 to 1987.

In the five years prior to the 1980 census an estimated 8,000 people 65 or older retired to the state's 19 westernmost counties, ranging from a low of 37 in Graham County to a high of 2,177 in Henderson County.

But on a proportionate basis, Polk County's 418 retirees tops the list, said Bill Haas, associate professor of sociology at UNCA and Research Institute director at the university's Center For Creative Retirement. Haas heads up a study funded with a \$111,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant to examine the economic impact of retirement migration in Western North Carolina.

He said initial research indicates the so-called "gray peril" associated with the influx of retirees is a myth. Demands on existing health care systems are offset by health insurance payments they make, and retirees — typically educated people themselves — do not generally vote against school bond issues simply because they have no school-age chil-

dren, Haas said.

Haas said his research shows that physicians are being attracted to practice in rural counties because of the retirees there.

"The issue of retirees moving into an area ... well, we know plenty about who they are and where they move. What we don't know is what resources they bring to an area and what demands they put on services," Haas said.

Haas will study 750 households in Western North Carolina, asking each to keep a confidential expenditure diary for two weeks. He hopes that exercise will help him assess the impact of retirees on an area.

Some suspect the retirees and other newcomers also may be influencing political shifts.

Traditionally most of Western North Carolina has been Democratic, outnumbering Republicans nearly 2 to 1. But in the last seven years the rolls of registered Republicans have grown at an almost 2-to-1 pace over Democrats. From 1980 to 1987 the Republicans gained 20,126 new members while the Democrats gained 9,910.

And communities have felt the impact of retirees in other ways.

In 1983, the Rev. Tyler Martin of Franklin Presbyterian Church became concerned because of the lack of young people coming to church.

"We did a study, and we learned that Macon County's school population was dropping, but the county was growing. We were shocked. So we quit beating ourselves and faced reality. We needed to pay attention to the fact that we are growing, but growing with retirees. They are adding life to this county," Martin said.

Jean and William Williams moved to the Macon County mountains of Western North Carolina in

1981. They had been coming here for vacations since 1954.

Like so many other Floridians, they said they were tired of the "rat race" in Florida.

"It's so pretty up here and the people are so friendly," said Jean Williams, a retired marine biologist from St. Petersburg. "Another thing was the climate and the way the people accept you. I'd retire here again in a minute," she said.

They have become active in the community. He is a director of the West Macon Volunteer Fire Department and president of the Upper Cartoogechaye Community Club. She is treasurer of the community club and does volunteer work for the home extension office at the annual county fair.

### ■ Other Newcomers

All the newcomers, of course, are not retirees. An expanding economy in Western North Carolina in recent years has brought many executives, professionals and other young workers to the area from many parts of the country.

Steve Jenkins, senior director of economic development for the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, said many people involved in corporate transfers pick the North Carolina mountains for a new location based simply on the quality of life here.

"What you normally find ... when we are one of the last two or three locations and there is not much difference in the bottom line, the quality of life here is extremely important," Jenkins said.

The mountains also have become home for younger city dwellers, attracted more specifically by the natural area and the community.

Jill Walkenshaw, 40, moved to



Western North Carolina in 1985 after 19 years as a flight attendant with Eastern Airlines.

She decorates cotton shirts, makes collars and is a quilter. She has a 15-year-old daughter.

"We moved out of the (Florida) Keys to get away from the rat race. The tourists were running the locals out," Walkenshaw, a native of Florida, said as she sorted brightly colored bolts of cloth at Maco Crafts south of Franklin.

"I love the distinct seasons and the friendliness of the people. There's a much slower pace of living. But I am concerned about what I've seen happen in the Keys happening here where uncontrolled growth takes place."

The rate of pay is lower in Western North Carolina, Walkenshaw said, but that's something one accepts in exchange for a higher quality of life.

Ron Lambe moved to the mountains "to get back to the land and leave the urban experience behind." The Greensboro native had spent several years in California before buying an old homestead in Mitchell County.

"I wanted to raise my own vegetables and breathe the fresh air," said Lambe, who now works for the Western North Carolina Alliance. After several years he had found that the problems of pollution were here too, and that he had to get involved.

"It dawned on me I had to stand my ground," he said. "You can't just keep running away from problems, because there's nowhere else to go. You can't even go to the South Pole anymore without encountering pollution."

#### ■ 'Homegrown' Changes

Some contend "newcomers" have generated much of the increas-

ing interest in Western North Carolina's environmental issues. And many long-time residents continue to voice strong opposition to land-use controls and other environmental regulations.

But some of the activists are "homegrown."

Clarence Hall, a 57-year-old tobacco farmer and avid hunter, became active in opposing Forest Service clear-cutting after seeing what the practice did to the land around his Jackson County home.

"I was raised here in the mountains, and it got so you couldn't get through the woods because of the briar patches from clear-cuts," Hall said. "It hurts our game, the bear especially. And where you clear-cut it warms the water, and it's not good for fish."

And there are signs of broad-based recognition of "quality of life" issues. The Asheville Chamber of Commerce, for example, has established a committee with a mission during the coming year of developing plans for responsible growth.

"We're not going to kill the goose that's laying the golden egg, that's for sure," said Jenkins of the Asheville chamber. "We recognize the concerns that many have about the quality of life and the environment."

Buncombe County Manager Steve Metcalf also feels that protecting the mountains is on the minds of many people.

"Protecting the environment is consistent with our own traditions. As a child, we learned to live with the environment. We coexisted with it, and we preserved. That's what we want to do."

Associate Editor Jay Hensley and Staff Writer Clarke Morrison contributed to this report.

**W**e did a study, and we learned that Macon County's school population was dropping, but the county was growing. We were shocked. So we quit beating ourselves and faced reality. We needed to pay attention to the fact that we are growing, but growing with retirees. They are adding life to this county."

— Rev. Tyler Martin

**It dawned on me I had to stand my ground. You can't just keep running away from problems, because there's nowhere else to go. You can't even go to the South Pole anymore without encountering pollution."**

— Recent Mitchell County settler  
Ron Lambe

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Tomorrow In The Citizen-Times:  
Environmental Laws And Regulations



## Who Owns The Mountains?

# Loggers: Livelihood Threatened By Environmentalists

By **BOB SCOTT**  
Western Bureau

**TRIMONT RIDGE** — Lonnie Brendle, like many Western North Carolina loggers, sees his livelihood threatened.

"I wouldn't advise anybody to get in logging with the way we're getting kicked back," says the 36-year-old native and resident of Bryson City.

Logging has a long tradition in the mountains. It's the work that opened up the mountains — bringing the railroad into coves and hollows and providing work for folks who struggled to scratch out a living on rock scabble farms roosted on hill-sides so steep that mules found it hard to stand up straight.

Even the area of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park had been logged many times before it became one of the nation's most popular parks.

Indirectly, logging and the timber industry put groceries on the table for 8,000 people in Western North Carolina, according to the

Southern Appalachians Multiple Use Council, a timbering and lumber manufacturing lobbying organization based in Sylva.

The multi-million dollar industry ranges from small operations like Brendle's to such large outfits as the WNC Pallet and Forest Products Co. based in Candler and W.C. Hennessee Lumber Co. of Sylva, which own huge tracts of land in the mountains.

But as private timber lands are lost to development, loggers say their dependence on trees from the national forests grows.

Brendle believes opposition to the U.S. Forest Service's practice of clear-cutting and environmentalists who fight timber sales on national forest lands are threatening the logger's way of life.

"Speaking for the whole crew, we don't support and don't approve (of putting forests into wilderness) because I don't think the land was put here just to look at," Brendle said.

"People who are against clear-cutting think that when it's (timber)

gone, it's gone for good. But it isn't. It'll come back better," Brendle said.

Today's logger is typically a small entrepreneur. He organizes and undertakes logging — assuming the risk and a large investment — for what he hopes will be a profit. In recent years the going has gotten tough for loggers.

The days of cut and haul are gone. Loggers are bound by Forest Service regulations that specify certain environmental and safety concerns must be met before he can begin cutting trees.

"It'd take at least \$100,000 to get into it. You've got to have a skidder, dozer, loader and trucks," Brendle said.

Brendle and his brother, Wayne, began logging 15 years ago, buying "a few pieces of equipment as we could afford it." The Brendles and two

other men make up the logging crew.

Brendle's day begins at 4:45 a.m. By 6 a.m. he leaves Bryson City and is on the job by 7. Normally he works until 5 p.m. and then there's the hour's drive back home.

Often the day doesn't end until after 9 p.m. Sometimes equipment breaks down and there are no mechanics in the woods. A logger has to be a businessman, a mechanic, an engineer, a meteorologist and a heavy-equipment operator.

But in spite of the odds, Brendle acknowledges the income from logging and the timber industry in Western North Carolina has made life a lot better financially than it was 10 years ago.

"I try to keep an open mind, but there are lots of people who have moved in and fight you," Brendle said.



— Photo By BOB SCOTT

### Big Investment

Lonnie Brendle, an independent logger from Bryson City, stands beside a dozer and one of the large logging trucks he and his brother, Wayne, operate. Logging is a traditional mountain enterprise, but one that Brendle and other loggers feel is threatened by those who do not want timber cut on public lands.

### THE NEWS IS FREE

A Citizen-Times subscrip



## Who Owns The Mountains?

# MAMA Might Have Helped WNC Environment, But It Died In '75

By JAY HENSLEY

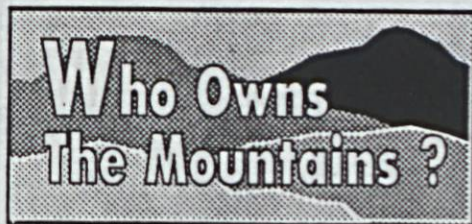
Associate Editor

It's been almost 15 years since the North Carolina General Assembly debated a plan for growth management in the mountains, then trashed it.

Some lawmakers who were there in 1975 say the proposed Mountain Area Management Act was ahead of its time. And while they were against it then, they've had second thoughts as they watched their favorite trout stream die of pollution or a scenic view they admired obscured by unflattering construction.

The bill was presented to the legislature in 1974 along with the Coastal Area Management Act, but was laid aside by the sponsors so they could devote full attention that year to environmental problems on North Carolina's coast.

When it was introduced again in the 1975 General Assembly, an almost solid line of angry opposition formed among county commission-



### Public Vistas, Private Rights

ers from the mountains, and the western delegation to the legislature generally sided with them.

"I think there was one county commissioner or a member of some town council that came to the big public hearing we had and spoke in favor of it — and he was booed," Asheville attorney John S. Stevens said of an airing for the bill in Asheville.

Stevens, then a member of the General Assembly who had served since 1969, was House sponsor of the ill-fated Mountain Area Management Act.

By that time one of the most

sought-after members of the House and Senate for his comfortable command of complicated legislation, Stevens was a favorite of committee chairmen in both chambers. He immediately took charge of MAMA in the House.

Provisions of the bill called for establishment of a 15-member Mountain Resources Commission to designate areas of environmental concern — including areas of more than 4,500 feet above sea level, slopes in excess of 40 percent, and areas within specified distances of state and national park entrances, among others.

It would have required permits for development within environmentally sensitive areas, and the issuance of a permit would be decided by the resources commission. Local governments in the area would nominate 12 of the 15 members under provisions of the bill, and no more than two of the 15 could live outside the mountain area.

In looking back at the 1970s battles, Stevens said a problem with that type of legislation is that you often have to compromise to get it passed

to the extent that the final product is virtually useless.

"And I think they really did compromise the coastal areas act a whole lot. And some would say that a sorry or weak bill is worse than no bill.

"On the other hand, ... the optimists among us can say, 'Well that's a start.' And I tend to think that's a better course. Because you hear people on the coast now looking at some of the things that are happening down there and saying, 'You know we need to strengthen this thing. Now's the time to take another look at the Coastal Area Management Act,'" he said.

Stevens said he recently dug a copy of the Mountain Area Management Bill out of his files to prepare for a seminar the North Carolina Bar Association was holding on the environment.

"It's amazing all the things that were looked at, and where we are now and where we might be if we had been able to do something," he said.

But he said he would not recom-

mend an effort in the General Assembly to revive the Mountain Area Management Act as it was introduced 15 years ago.

"I think it would be a mistake to revive it. I think that some of the ideas and principles in there are worthy of looking at. But I think that a greater emphasis on local participation and involvement, rather than having ultimately somebody at the state level telling you what to do, is essential."

Stevens said the people, and the local officials they elect, must be supportive of that type of legislation to make it workable, and that was not the case in the mid-70s.

"If you don't have some local government behind you, then it's just not there. And it wasn't there. And that was unfortunate," Stevens said.

Under the 1975 proposal the council would have developed an overall master plan for the region, then local governments would have a fixed period of time in which to adopt ordinances meeting the requirements of the master plan, Stevens said.

"If they didn't, the big plan took over," he recalled. "And the big study people had control of major developments, and you had to get a permit. That permitting process puts you at the mercy of some little bureaucrat behind a desk — and who wants to do that?"

Stevens said some of the basic approaches MAMA took to land use management in 1975 are no more realistic today than they were then. But some of the objectives sought "are what we all want, and I think it's something that can be looked at, but I think it would have to be changed."

Stevens said he believes the people in the mountains may now be at a point where they could work within a land use plan concept that is properly structured.

"I'm not sure the timing is exactly right, but I'm sure it's a whole lot better than it was 10 or 15 years ago. And I think that ... if the right people gave some new direction to it, and maybe some innovative ideas, it could sell."



# 'Obstructionists' Block Forest Management

Sept. 5, 1989 ?

This is in answer to two letters that appeared in the last few weeks in your newspaper. One was from Peter Kirby of The Wilderness Society and the other was David Blanchard-Reid of the Sierra Club.

Both gentlemen were "saddened and disappointed" by the actions of members of the timber industry at the Robbinsville timber rally. I wouldn't wonder. It was one of the few times the timber industry reared up and answered the obstructionist, anti-progress, ill-conceived programs of those two organizations. The timber industry's rally was long overdue and will no doubt be followed by additional events designed to show the public how important the timber industry is to the region, to the state, and above all, to the people of this area.

Timber resource industries are the second-largest generator of revenue in the state. Tourism doesn't even come close, not even in Western North Carolina. Those who would twist the facts for their own purpose would lead the public to believe that tourism in Western North Carolina is more important, but it is not the truth.

The truth is, true multiple-use management of forest resources is the only way to assure future generations they will have those resources. Wilderness is non-management and a sure method of sentencing a healthy forest to death, disease and decay.

There is no argument strong enough to overcome the fact that, through the U.S. Forest Service's stewardship, most of what the obstructionists now are calling wilderness has been harvested, managed and restored through the multiple-use concept of forest management.

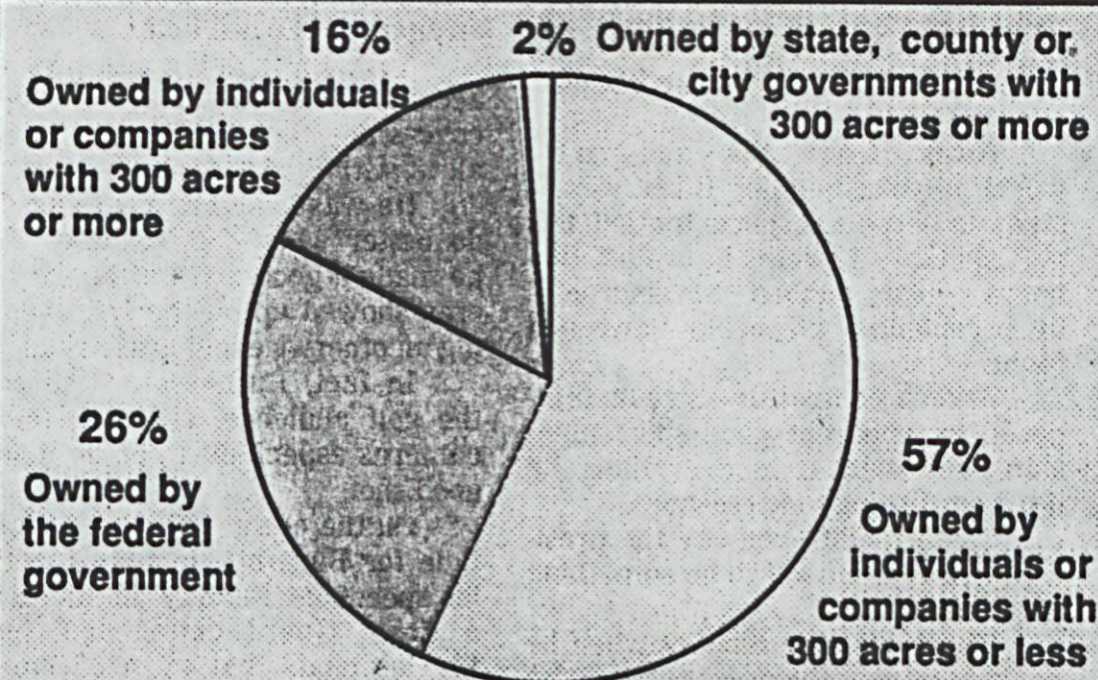
In addition, it has been proved true all across the country that forests managed to promote the use of all of the benefits of the forest including timber harvest, wildlife habitat management, clean water, and other legitimate uses are much better for recreation than the limited-access, elitist concept of wilderness.

James L. Gundy  
High Point

(Gundy is executive vice president of Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc.)



## Land Ownership In The Mountains



Figures reflect landholdings for 19-county region, which includes Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Clay, Cherokee, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey counties.

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## Natural Heritage Program Protects Many WNC Acres

By JAY HENSLEY  
Associate Editor

Chuck Roe flips through file folders on a desk in his Raleigh office and comes up with one labeled North Fork Watershed, Asheville.

"This is a special case — a portion of the Asheville watershed — and we have been working with the staff there over the years in the upper elevation areas that are in full growth. That's one of the higher priorities in the county," Roe said.

Roe wasn't talking about a joint effort between Asheville and North Carolina to come up with a new drinking water supply for the people of Buncombe County.

He was talking about the 860-acre North Fork Natural Area along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Buncombe County, part of a program involving thousands of acres of public lands in North Carolina and lesser amounts of privately held acreage, designed to assure protection for the state's fragile natural areas.

Charles E. Roe is coordinator of the small staff of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program within the state Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources.

"Many areas that are unprotected — even in the mountain region — are on private property," Roe said. "We are anxious...to inform and work with these owners and try to bring about the conservation of those areas."

The Natural Heritage Program was established in 1976 by what is now the state Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources with the assistance of the Nature Conservancy. It is one of a national network of 49 state natural heritage programs engaged in actions to identify and protect impor-



### Public Vistas, Private Rights

tant natural areas and habitats for rare and endangered species.

The Nature Conservancy, a private non-profit organization with 435,000 members nationwide, was founded in 1951 to preserve plants, animals and habitats either by buying the land or arranging sales to government agencies for protection.

The Natural Heritage Program has designated as natural regions 288,364 acres of public lands in 19 mountain counties, and 4,968 privately owned acres that are now registered natural heritage areas as part of the statewide program. An inventory is under way that will eventually identify all that remains of natural habitats of rare and endangered species.

The goal of the Natural Heritage Program is the preservation of the natural diversity of the state. Although it lacks sufficient funding and staffing to achieve all its objectives, it has made substantial progress, Roe said.

He said an inventory of natural areas has so far identified more than 850 throughout the state that have exceptional importance for the survival of North Carolina's natural heritage. Approximately 45 percent of them are in the mountain counties, he said.

Alan Smith, a Mars Hill biologist under contract with the program to inventory natural areas, said his

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# Program

◆ From Page 1A

work is about half finished in Buncombe County, one of the first in the mountains to enter the program.

The greatest concentration of mountain natural regions, with an array of plant and animal life that makes them one of the most important centers for biological diversity in the United States, is on government land with some measure of protection from development.

"In Buncombe County the Blue Ridge Parkway and the national forests do have a preponderance of the better areas, but there are a number of places on private property," Smith said.



SMITH

Concern for preserving natural areas and ecological resources derives from the understanding that there are basic relationships between people and other living things that share the earth.

Many of the state's outstanding natural lands and native plants are endangered. In the wake of burgeoning development, natural resources are being consumed and natural habitats destroyed with unprecedented speed.

Officials in Mitchell County, with only 18,600 acres of the county's 220 square miles (142,080 acres) under federal ownership, beat down a proposal for legislation to designate 24,000 acres of the highlands of Roan Mountain as a National Forest Scenic Area.

About half the proposed scenic area is already owned by the U.S. Forest Service, and the proposed legislation would authorize acquisition of privately owned land above the 4,600-foot elevation.

The legislation was sought by the Tennessee-based Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy to place the full 24,000 acres in the hands of the Forest Service for preservation as a scenic area.

U.S. Rep. James McClure Clarke, D-N.C., agreed with the opposition, assuring that the legislation will not be introduced in Congress until Mitchell County asks for it.

Residents say the legislation would adversely affect the entire county by eroding its tax base, and may prevent landowners from earn-

ing their livelihoods as tree growers and from passing their land on to their children as in past generations. They also maintain that the Forest Service should not acquire more land until it does a better job of maintaining the acreage it already owns.

Bill Eaker, an environmental planner with the Land-of-Sky Regional Council in Asheville, said he believes the Forest Service and most other government agencies do a better job with mountain land than the private sector.

Eaker calls WNC one of the most unique areas on earth because of its natural beauty and diversity. He said his major concern on a personal basis is the stewardship of private lands.

"Those that hold title to the land are simply the caretakers for a period of time. Basically, we are only stewards of the land ... and the key to our quality of life — or even our survival — depends on our stewardship of the land and its resources," Eaker said.

Eaker said that while public policy regarding land management is now under examination, more attention to the issue is needed.

"Some of the problems that I see include the loss of important natural areas and natural diversity ... and the diversity of plant and animal life in the area," Eaker said.

Since it was established 11 years ago, the North Carolina chapter of the Nature Conservancy has protected 311,621 acres — slightly less than 10 percent of all the land protected nationwide by the conservancy.



EAKER

Of those protected acres, it owns and manages about 28,000 acres, which are divided into 35 preserves.

The conservancy's most recent negotiations for protection involve Panthertown Valley, located along the Tuckasegee River. The conservancy persuaded Congress to appropriate \$8 million for the U.S. Forest Service to buy the land from Duke Power Co.

The valley contains a lichen unique to the area, a rare Southern Appalachian bog and large granite domes.





The North Carolina chapter of the Nature Conservancy is one of the most successful in the country, and chapter officials say part of the reason is because it has been able to work with corporations that either sell or donate land to the organization.

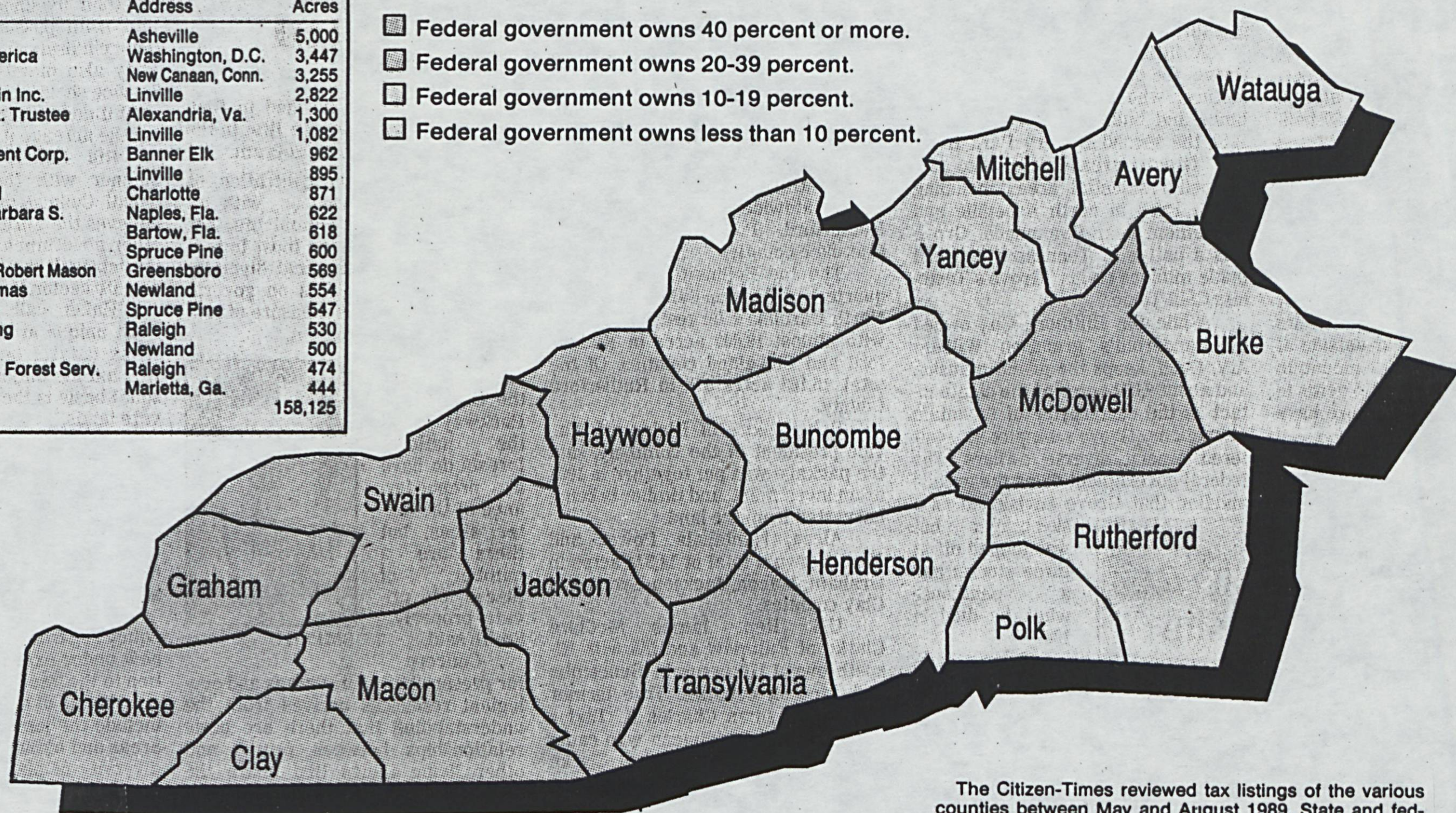


## Avery County

Owner	Address	Acres
Land & Mineral Co.	Asheville	5,000
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	3,447
Unimin Corp.	New Canaan, Conn.	3,255
Grandfather Mountain Inc.	Linville	2,822
Seligson, Stephen L. Trustee	Alexandria, Va.	1,300
Linville Resorts Inc.	Linville	1,082
Elk River Development Corp.	Banner Elk	962
Wilmor Corp.	Linville	895
Wilson, John B. et al	Charlotte	871
Leiti, Joseph J. & Barbara S.	Naples, Fla.	622
Stuart, J.K.	Bartow, Fla.	618
Phillips, Frank heirs	Spruce Pine	600
Cheek, Charles W. & Robert Mason	Greensboro	569
Fraser Fir for Christmas	Newland	554
Mitchell Lumber Co.	Spruce Pine	547
Williams, Mason Long	Raleigh	530
Guy, E.C. heirs	Newland	500
N.C. Dept. of Admin. Forest Serv.	Raleigh	474
Bennett, W.C.	Marietta, Ga.	444
Total County Acres		158,125

# Who Owns The Mountains?

-  Federal government owns 40 percent or more.
-  Federal government owns 20-39 percent.
-  Federal government owns 10-19 percent.
-  Federal government owns less than 10 percent.



**Notes:** More than 2 million of the 4.7 million acres spread out over 19 mountain counties of Western North Carolina are owned by individuals, companies or government agencies in tracts of 300 acres or more.

The Citizen-Times reviewed tax listings of the various counties between May and August 1989. State and federal land ownership figures for each county were provided by the Soil Conservation Service. While the listings for each county on this page do not include all property owners of 300 acres or more, each list represents at least 30 percent of the individual tracts.



## Buncombe County

Owner	Address	Acres
City of Asheville	Asheville	35,000
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	31,448
Biltmore Co.	Asheville	7,708
Biltmore Dairy Farms Inc.	Asheville	6,704
B A S F Corp.	Williamsburg, Va.	3,818
Mountain Retreat Association	Montreat	2,401
Chemtronics Inc.	Swannanoa	2,096
Young Life Campaign	Weaverville	1,729
State of N.C.	Raleigh	1,279
Watts, Ann D. Watts et al	Brookline, Mass.	1,170
Billy Graham Evangelistic Assn.	Minneapolis, Mn.	1,120
B.V. Hedrick Gravel & Sand	Swannanoa	1,052
Guerin, James H.	Lancaster, Pa.	925
Medure, Peter D.	Asheville	743
Straus, Harry H. III	Potomac, Md.	743
Christ School Inc.	Arden	723
Jones, R.S. Jr.	Franklin	674
Harris, Charles D. et al	Barnardsville	674
Carolina Power & Light Co.	Asheville	639
Walnut Cove Farm	Arden	593
Ranchland Inc.	Candler	581
Eekhout, Cornelis A.M. et al	The Netherlands	562
Dill Trust Limited	Tampa, Fla.	559
Clarke, James M. and Elspeth	Fairview	547
Moose, Glenn C.	Gaffney, S.C.	529
Christmont Christian Assn.	Black Mountain	507
Hearne, Charles S. and Miram G.	Leicester	505
Singh, S. Rawel	Asheville	500
John M. DuBose Estate	Old Fort	410
Honeycutt, Georgia G. et al	Asheville	389
Alpine Investment Corp.	Asheville	388
Roskamp, Robert G. and Leota G.	Largo, Fla.	384
Whiteside, C. Jr. et al	Deerfield Bch., Fla.	367
Arnstein, Felix F. et al	Asheville	367
E.B. Comodari Trust	St. Lauderdale, Fla.	364
McDarris, Joseph C.	Waynesville	360
Van Steenburgh, E.W. and Barbara	DeKalb, Ill.	359
Taylor, Charles H. and Elizabeth	Brevard	356
Bryan, C.R.	Decatur, Ga.	351
Cogburn, Max O. et al	Candler	349
Total County Acres		421,971

## Burke County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	48,775
Crescent Land & Timber	Charlotte	37,716
State of North Carolina	Raleigh	18,370
Brackett Bros. Corp.	Morganton	7,711
Champion International	Greenville, S.C.	6,829
City of Morganton	Morganton	4,406
Catawba Timber Co.	Calhoun, Tenn.	2,385
Carter, Marion J.	Black Mountain	1,939
Pine Mtn Partnership	Gainesville, Fla.	1,848
Bridgewater Group	Spruce Pine	1,274
A&E Electric Co. Inc. Employees	Lake Worth, Fla.	1,244
Chapman, R.C. heirs	Morganton	1,141
Deaton, P.P.	Valdese	949
Shuffler, Jack R. et al	Morganton	942
Leaf, Evelyn G. et al	Morganton	938
Poteet, Jack R. & Emily J.	Morganton	875
Huffman, Guy heirs et al	Connelly Springs	873
Pine Mtn Propert Owners Assn. Inc.	Connelly Springs	837
Barron, Nelle W.	Morganton	820
Erwin, W. Clark Jr.	Morganton	818
Bellevue Farm Trust	Morganton	813
Brinkley, J.D. Jr. et al	Vale	774
Ensley, Lee Edward et al	Canton	626
Total County Acres		322,848

## Clay County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	65,700
Champion International	Greenville, S.C.	758
Nantahala Power & Light Co.	Franklin	741
Thom Swanson	Hayesville	683
Ledford & David Hyatt et al	Hayesville	474
Gribble, Mrs. Cloyce	Hayesville	398
Moss, Paul Estate	Midland, Texas	398
Harris, Rogers & Hassie et al	Greer, S.C.	395
Arve, Harold (& Dorothy)	Homestead, Fla.	388
Jarrett, Neal (& Mary)	Hayesville	381
Total County Acres		136,902

## Cherokee County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	92,300
Hiwassee Land-Bowater	Calhoun, Tenn.	2,816
W.S. Dickey Estate	Murphy	2,400
Hounsom, Pauline B. et al	Atlanta, Ga.	1,802
Dickey, John E. et al	Murphy	1,753
Wells, Wm. J. et al	Murphy	1,378
Champion International	Greenville, S.C.	1,206
Felix Palmer	Murphy	957
Dickey, W.S. & Kate	Asheville	856
Forsyth, Wm F. Jr. et al	Murphy	850
Matheson, Michael M. (trustee)	Miami, Fla.	836
Dickey, Jack & Harry et al	Asheville	774
Stiles, Hedden & Edith	Murphy	770
Wood, Edgar A. III, Eva et al	Andrews	763
Ridgefield Farm (E.J. Whitmire)	Franklin	747
Dickey, Edward B. & Helen M.	Murphy	677
Mason, John H.	Murphy	626
Heaton, Robert E. & Evelyn	Asheville	617
Staicup Mtn Ltd. Partnership	Atlanta, Ga.	602
WNC Partnership	Candler	591
Total County Acres		289,171

## Graham County

Owner	Address	Acres
United Sates of America	Washington, D.C.	112,600
Tapoca Inc.	Alcoa, Tenn.	6,031
West, Howard	Murphy	1,564
Veach, John B. Jr.	Maryville, Tenn.	1,387
Mission, Ready	Robbinsville	1,347
Phillips & Jordan Investments	Robbinsville	1,178
Miller, William R.	Robbinsville	915
Boesel, Milton C. Jr.	Toledo, Ohio	573
Garland, Clyde	Robbinsville	508
Thompson, Paul Clayton	Chattanooga, Tenn.	497
Edwards, Monroe	Robbinsville	443
Gilmore, William J.	Pensacola, Fla.	436
Thrash, Thomas L.	Asheville	412
Total County Acres		184,762

## Haywood County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	133,636
Town of Waynesville	Waynesville	6,100
Champion International Corp.	Canton	4,048
Major Land & Timber Co.	Brevard	3,008
Haywood Rod & Gun Club Inc.	Waynesville	1,515
Queen, John M. heirs	Waynesville	1,054
Howell, Ruth Robeson	Waynesville	972
Powell, J.T. Jr. & J.T. III et al	Canton	961
Town of Canton	Canton	863
Campbell, Joe heirs et al	Maggie Valley	758
Williams, Robert H. Sr. et al	Maggie Valley	728
Messer, Jack; Messer, Charles E.	Waynesville	674
Cataloochee Ranch (Partnership)	Maggie Valley	614
Kirkpatrick, John H. Jr. & Jane M.	Clyde	606
Sheepback Mountain Inc.	Sante, S.C.	588
Takinen, Elizabeth S. et al	W. Palm Beach, Fla.	520
Fishback, HD. & Florence trustee	Canton	515
Fowler, R.J.	St. James City, Fla.	496
Gilmore, Volt & Kathryn K. McNeil	Pinehurst	481
Dyckes, Stanley A.	Asheville	464
Royal Oaks Inc.	Canton	419
Daniel Boone Council Inc.	Asheville	416
Total County Acres		355,104

## Henderson County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	18,653
Justus, Linda Carolina	Travelers Rest, S.C.	4,820
E.I. duPont de Nemours & Co.	Wilmington, Del.	4,716
Kenmure Properties Ltd.	Flat Rock	3,907
Schenck, Alexander et al	Flat Rock	3,432
Champion International Corp.	Greenville, S.C.	1,979
Rhyne, Henry H.	Mt. Holly	1,700
Wolfs Lair Ltd.	Sarasota, Fla.	1,420
Duke Power Co.	Charlotte	1,411
Redden, M.M.	Hendersonville	1,000
Kanuga Conferences Inc.	Hendersonville	984
Polchow, Robert W. & Wife	New Orleans, La.	753
Geltman, Katherine	Hendersonville	682
Scotch Ridge Inc.	Hendersonville	671
Barnwell, George	Hendersonville	651
Youngblood, D.L.	Fletcher	602
Perry, James V Sr.	Hendersonville	601
Hollabrook Farms Inc.	Fletcher	591
Perry, Llewellyn LA Bruce	Asheville	561
The Layman Foundation of N.C.	Fletcher	527
Gore, Joseph A.	Hendersonville	469
Total County Acres		239,610

## Jackson County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	71,566
Duke Power Co.	Charlotte	7,053
Champion International Corp.	Greenville, S.C.	4,019
Thomas, Robert	Thonotosassa, Fla.	5,023
GT&W Inc. of Gastonia	Gastonia	3,838
Nantahala Power & Light Co.	Sylva	2,393
Todd, J.L.	Rome, Ga.	2,377
Clark, Carleton L. Trustee	Wauchula, Fla.	1,931
Rutland Bank (trustee)	Tampa, Fla.	1,594
Davenport, Elizabeth L.	Chattanooga, Tenn.	1,439
Hennessee W.C. Land Co.	Sylva	1,247
Town of Sylva	Sylva	1,088
Beutell, Thomas et al	Tuckasegee	1,062
Fairfield Communities Inc.	Sapphire	1,060
Henry, Katharine Henry, Ann R.	Cashiers	908
Cedar Creek Realty Co.	Asheville	839
Crouch, G.E. Jr.	Louisville, Ga.	837
Morris, Lois	Sylva	758
Lonesome Valley Co. Inc.	Asheville	777
Smoky Mtn. Mental Health Dev.	Whittier	717
High Hampton Inc.	Cashiers	705
Fairfield Sapphire Valley Inc.	Sapphire	621
International Mineral & Chem. Co.	Deerfield, Ill.	670
Smith, Sherman N. Jr.	Vero Beach, Fla.	595
Cannon, Ann Horr, Pauline	Jacksonville, Fla.	594
Corbin, John F. Jr. et al	Sylva	592
Cameron, Bruce B.	Candler	582
Leder, Samuel E. Eisenberg	Boca Raton, Fla.	551
Carolina Riteco, Inc.	Vero Beach, Fla.	534
Stoncrop Falls Corp.	Cashiers	534
Dillard, Roger Jr. et al trust	Franklin	527
Rust, Phillip H. Jr. et al	Wilmington, Del.	521
Total County Acres		313,933



## Macon County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	149,498
Nantahala Power & Light Co.	Franklin	4,271
Rainbow Springs Partnership	Swannanoa	2,256
Berry, John estate	Franklin	744
Ballantine, Wm. L. trustee	Ft. Myers, Fla.	651
Bartholomew, Bruce A. trustee	Ft. Myers, Fla.	626
Silvernell, Edgar D. et al	Madison, Fla.	589
Dean, Lolita & Ralph	Franklin	563
Bryant, Mac S.	Franklin	559
Gardner, B.C. Jr. Kelly Jr.	Albany, Ga.	523
Hennessee WC Land Co.	Sylva	522
Shope, Joseph P. Shope Wy.	Otto	483
Parker, Robert & Neal	Franklin	462
Hastings, Glenn & Virginia	Franklin	459
Elmore, Robert	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.	453
Southerland, Mary	Winston-Salem	424
Total County Acres		330,611

## Madison County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	51,254
Carolina Power & Light Co.	Raleigh	3,912
Hennessee Lumber Co.; Hammermill	Skyland	3,584
Mashburn, C.E. & Mattie Cody et al	Marshall	2,006
Roberts, Landon H.	Asheville	1,590
Walnut Gap estates Ltd.	Miami, Fla.	1,305
Tangeman, Richard G. et al	Sanford, Fla.	988
Brown & Brown Farms	Greenville, S.C.	853
Reeves, R.C. & Robt. Burder & wives	Leicester	767
Reems, Glenn & Vergle	Marshall	772
Hogan, Wm. F. & Mary S.	Thomasville, Ga.	747
Hipps, Bryon N.	Oaks Brook, In.	747
White, Henry H. (and Lee)	Daytona Bch., Fla.	669
Ramsey, Gilbert	Longwood, Fla.	661
Fowler, Cline C. & Mary Ruth	Hot Springs	616
Gahagan, Bonnie Lee Wm; Rew J	Asheville	601
Zeno Ponder	Marshall	594
Total County Acres		288,838

## McDowell County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	68,500
Champion International Corp.	Greenville, S.C.	6,191
WNC Pallet & Forest Products Inc.	Candler	5,609
Federal Paperboard Co. Inc.	Southern Pines	5,265
Dan Adams Jr., Mary V. & June C.	Old Fort	3,307
Lake Tahoma Inc.	Marion	2,726
Catawba Timber; Sam B. Craig	Mooreboro	2,468
Holston Land Co. Inc.	Jacksonville, Fla.	1,901
Sam L. Phillips	Spruce Pine	1,820
Canal Land Limited Partnership	Conway, S.C.	1,753
State of North Carolina	Raleigh	1,604
W.H. Stuart	Bartow, Fla.	1,485
Frank Phillips	Spruce Pine	1,431
Mill Creek Wildlife Club Inc.	Pisgah Forest	1,225
Wildacres Retreat	Charlotte	1,092
John Yancey Estate	Miami, Fla.	1,051
Fred T. Boyd	Marion	1,031
Ralph W. Hutton, Etal.	Hickory	949
Eleanor G. & Leo D. Brevard	Matthews	916
Gateway Mtn.-Cameron McKenzie	Old Fort	893
Fred Thieburger	Alexandria, Va.	870
H&B Lumber Co.	Marion	829
John Brown	Marion	761
Fletcher Brown	Arcadia, Fla.	750
James Haney Jr.	Marion	706
David Gibbs	Marion	697
Buford W. Dixon	Raleigh	676
Blue Ridge Parkway Estate	Raleigh	573
Louise Beam	Marion	571
Roy W. Davis Jr.	Asheville	557
Total County Acres		279,930

## Mitchell County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	18,600
Penland-Bailey Co.	Spruce Pine	4,761
Mitchell Lumber Co.	Spruce Pine	1,685
Great Meadow	Spruce Pine	1,727
Christiansted Port Terminal Co.	St. Croix, V. Isles	1,041
Whitson, Frank	Bakersville	952
Beidler, Howard & Clara R.	Asheville	703
Dogwood Knoll Enterprise	Miami, Fla.	662
Walker, Arthur M.	N. Miami, Fla.	638
Hughes, Mrs. Jessie B.	Bakersville	539
Greene, Louise B.	St. Augustin, Fla.	523
Byrd, James & Louellen	Bakersville	517
Wilson, Ed Jr.	Bakersville	494
Whitson, Glenn	Bakersville	489
Matheson, John H.	Asheville	446
Covington, David Jr. & Patty	Spruce Pine	433
Marshall, Scott	Miami Lake, Fla.	399
Peterson, Ephlee	Greenmountain	398
Total County Acres		142,080

## Polk County

Owner	Address	Acres
Champion International Corp.	Greenville, S.C.	10,519
Story, Jack L.	Lynn	5,010
Hidden Springs Inc.	Mill Spring	4,224
Catawba Timber Co.	Calhoun, Tenn.	2,312
Herman, H.M. and Roger Staley	Miami, Fla.	2,006
Duke Power Co.	Charlotte	1,433
Hyottaine, Kenneth	Palm City, Fla.	1,322
Thompson, Bill and Allan	Rutherfordton	1,183
N.C. Wildlife Resources	Raleigh	1,085
Citnaita Corp.	Winston-Salem	1,085
Searcy, Richard S. and Vivian	Mill Spring, N.C.	1,026
Golden Citrus Corp.	Dade City, Fla.	987
Shunkawakan Corp.	Columbus	947
Camp Franklin	Charlotte	852
R & W Realty	Northville, N.Y.	715
Walker, Jackson N. et al	Mill Spring	711
Blair, Robert F. & Jean	Hudson, Ohio	693
Wallace, Robert and Diane	Columbus	656
W.S.W. Associates	Mill Spring	635
Slater Properties Inc.	Landrum, S.C.	629
Total County Acres		152,512

## Rutherford County

Owner	Address	Acres
Joe Rollins Co.	Winston-Salem	15,168
Champion International Corp.	Greenville, S.C.	8,400
Columbia Carolina Corp.	Old Fort	3,781
Broyhill Furniture	Lenoir	3,538
Briggs, E.L.	Burnsville	2,720
Crescent Land & Timber Corp.	Charlotte	1,770
Travelers Insurance Co.	Calhoun, Tenn.	1,591
CRK Properties	Asheville	1,581
Morrison, Robert H.	Rutherfordton	1,568
Bowater Inc.	Calhoun, Texas	1,322
LEID Corp.	Spindale	1,144
Doggett, Thomas C. Jr.	Rutherfordton	1,410
Galax Corp.	Spindale	984
Fox Haven Plantation	Rutherfordton	972
Lake Lure Co.	Miami, Fla.	952
Conroy, F.J.	Asheville	944
Candy Rock Mountain	Rutherfordton	927
Grose, J.C. & Grose, Ethel	Cornelius	851
Canal Land Ltd. Partnership	Conway, S.C.	821
Carolina Evangelistic Assn. Inc.	Charlotte	810
Cleghorn Enterprises Inc.	Rutherfordton	782
Proctor J.S. Co. Employees	Charlotte	650
Justice, Charles Heirs	Rutherfordton	633
Havice, Dorothy	Lake Lure	626
Total County Acres		363,277

## Swain County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	272,979
Wachovia Bank & Trust	Asheville	5,120
Nantahala Power & Light	Franklin	3,500
Alarka Laurel Ltd.	Albany, Ga.	2,088
Schenck, Virgil	Cocoa, Fla.	1,857
DeWitt, Dennis	Brookline, Mass.	1,270
DeHart, S.C. Estate	Bryson City	1,000
Tapoco, Inc.	Alcoa, Tenn.	885
Brightman, J. Skinner	Tampa, Fla.	664
Wike, Robin	Forks, Wash.	600
Dixon, Colon	R. Palm Beach, Fla.	511
Total County Acres		336,627

## Transylvania County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	87,239
Crescent Land & Timber Corp.	Charlotte	12,791
Taylor, Charles H. & Elizabeth O.	Bravard	8,609
E.I. duPont de Nemours & Co.	Wilmington, Del.	6,216
Lake Toxaway Co.	Lake Toxaway	2,671
Stone Eugene E. III	Greenville, S.C.	1,597
Cascade Power Co.	Bravard	1,550
Cart Ben M.	Spartanburg, S.C.	1,415
Ecusta Division- P.H. Glatfelter Co.	Pisgah Forest	1,335
J.M. Wallace Land Co.	Charlotte	1,293
Robin Hood Inc.	Cedar Mountain	1,210
Watkins Vandiver Kirven Gable	Anderson, S.C.	934
Hemlock Hills-The Wilds	Bravard	891
Morris Charles H.	Savannah, Ga.	825
Ingram R.C. et al	Asheville	819
Cameron, Bruce	Candler	669
E.L. Thomas Enterprises Inc.	Horse Shoe	810
Fetterhoff Norman L. trustee	Ocala, Fla.	571
First Union National Bank	Bravard	500
Polchow Elizabeth L. et al	New Orleans	767
Ridge Haven Inc.	Rosman	557
Watkins Et Al	Anderson, S.C.	793
Willis Ernest M.	Arlington, Va.	706
Whitmire John Clarence	Bravard	570
Williams Sumner M. & Jane B.	Cedar Mountain	574
Total County Acres		242,099

## Watauga County

Owner	Address	Acres
Johnson, R.B. & Sons	Wilkesboro	10,521
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	10,282
Wachovia Bank & Trust Co.	Winston-Salem	2,025
Bald Mountain Inc.	Greensboro	1,590
Repogle, Dr. Marion & Sons	Boone	1,440
Sutherland, R.E. & K. Love	Glade Spring, Va.	1,343
Brown, Mack D. & Willa Jean	Boone	1,329
State of North Carolina	Raleigh	1,064
Grandfather Mountain Inc.	Linville	976
Moretz, Robert G. estate	Deep Gap	951
Moretz, Eddie T.	Deep Gap	800
Cheek, Charles W. et al	Greensboro	752
Ward, Ray	Sugar Grove	741
Watson, Perry, & Alba estate	Banner Elk	654
Jordan, Lee Jay & Hattie H.	Deep Gap	642
Simmons, Charles; Marion Hodges	Deep Gap	625
Main, C.L. & Betty	Vilas	527
Watson, Norman	Banner Elk	488
Bryhill, John D. et al	Blowing Rock	473
Goodnight, James Jr. & Jay	Boone	442
Thomas, Wiley	Boone	440
Total County Acres		200,992

## Yancey County

Owner	Address	Acres
United States of America	Washington, D.C.	37,704
Fidelity Co.	Winston-Salem	7,827
Banks, Ben	Burnsville	3,904
Briggs, Eloise B. (& Olive Ford)	Burnsville	3,481
State of North Carolina	Raleigh	1,919
Walnut Mountain Venture	Jacksonville, Fla.	1,830
Mitchell Lumber Co.	Spruce Pine	1,743
Wilson, Frank Jerome & others	Burnsville	1,200
Buckner, Wm. H. Jr. & Mrs.	Burnsville	1,174
Brigham & Brigham	Miami, Fla.	900
Thomas, Helen R.	Burnsville	800
Celo Community Inc.	Burnsville	790
Motsinger, Elizabeth	Burnsville	739
E.F.P. Brigham	Miami Lakes, Fla.	770
William Randall & Sherre Lisa Banks	Burnsville	773
Wilson, Earl C.	Burnsville	650
McKay, Judith; W. Collingswood	Ontario, Can.	600
Homestead Preservation Ass.	Miami, Fla.	599
Silver, Ralph	Micaville	565
Young, Joe	Burnsville	534
Boone, Clyde	Greenmountain	528
Total County Acres		200,704



# Mountain People Face Hard Choices

## Environment, Land Use, Jobs Often Clash

■ First in a Series

By ED DAWSON

Managing Editor

In council chambers and public squares across Western North Carolina, residents are voicing their concern about the future of the mountains in a wide range of general and specific issues — forest management, land-use planning, billboards, water quality, acid rain, highway plans.

The region's natural character is often cited as its greatest resource, but many worry the scenic splendor that has fueled a 20-year surge in population and tourism may fall victim to pollution, pavement and power saws.

The questions often pit jobs against environment — loggers who see their livelihood threatened by calls for forest preservation, Champion paper mill workers who will lose their jobs to a cleaner Pigeon River.

And the land-use concerns strike at the heart of a landholder's right to do what he wants with his own land, something many residents won't give up without a fight.

"Mountain people are individuals that perhaps the rest of the world hasn't seen. They're very independent," said Rep. Martin Nesbitt, D-Buncombe. "The ownership of their land is one of their very basic values that they're not willing to compromise."

But others feel a wind of change, underscored by a growing number of active environmental interests demanding a say in the fate of mountain land, whether it is publicly or privately held.

"I think it has really come to a head. People have gotten so tired of having nothing to say about what's going on. They are looking around them and seeing the reason they moved here disappear," said Scott Parker, president of the Elisha Mitchell chapter of the National Audubon Society.



Public Vistas, Private Rights

**"M**ountain people are individuals that perhaps the rest of the world hasn't seen. They're very independent. The ownership of their land is one of their very basic values that they're not willing to compromise."

— Buncombe Representative  
Martin Nesbitt

**"T**he No. 1 reason people give for travel is scenic beauty. And how scenic will the scenic beauty be without trees? And not only does acid rain kill the trees, but it kills the fish and lakes. Even if you're not concerned about the environment, just common sense dictates that you have to preserve your investment."

— Blitmore Estate spokesman  
Rick King

But the concerns are reflected in people with roots here as well.

"People have seen things happen to their counties, to their land, to their resources, that they don't like," maintained Rep. Marty Kimsey, R-Macon. "There's been a perspective change."

And while the solutions are hard to come by, planners say it's defi-

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# Choices

## ♦ From Page 1A

nitely time to do something.

In describing what he believes is an ominous trend facing the Western North Carolina mountains, Bob Shepherd likes to quote a Chinese proverb: "If we do not change direction, we will end up where we are going."

The 570 million-year-old Appalachian Mountains stood largely undisturbed until the early 1900s when timber and mining interests became firmly established. The population of the 19 western counties stood at a little more than 250,000 at the turn of

the century, but doubled by 1950, census figures show.

The coming of the railroad in the first 30 years of the new century opened up the forests to logging. Harvesting trees, viewed as the most valuable renewable resource of the Blue Ridge Mountains, became a thriving industry.

Lumber companies acquired many of the large tracts held earlier by mining investors. Power companies began to buy up land for the development of hydroelectric plants. Paper mills, one at Canton and a smaller operation at Sylva, were consuming great stacks of pulpwood by the middle of the century.

Logging left some mountainsides barren, and many times the elements carved huge canyons across the land, sometimes indistinguishable from the deep gashes cut by feldspar and mica mining operations.

But also during that period, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service were beginning to reclaim much of the devastated land. Funds for reforestation were authorized in 1930, and purchasers of national forest timber were required to put up money to cover the cost of reclaiming the land.

Construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway was authorized in 1933. The

establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937 not only provided jobs for many without work, but was a major factor in reforestation of the North Carolina mountains.

The population of most mountain counties remained flat with considerable out-migration in the '50s and '60s, but since the 1970 census the population of 19 counties grew from 551,793 to 691,140.

More people demanded increasing housing construction, and the steady growth has generally followed a haphazard pattern in the counties on the western edge of the state. Asheville, the hub city and the "metropolis of the mountains," regulates building to some degree but evidence of many enforcement failures abounds.

Macon County, reporting only 50 new units in 1976, started 294 new homes in 1988. Henderson County went from 15 building permits 12 years ago to 629 last year.

Many people who settled in the mountains in search of a better quality of life find that their increasing numbers contribute to the threat to the very goals they sought. Some of the small towns are losing their "away-from-it-all" atmosphere as newcomers crowd the hardware store and new strip shopping centers.

"No growth is not possible, but we can't live with unlimited growth forever," said Mayor John Cleveland of Highlands in Macon County.

Highlands is facing unprecedented growth. The town board estimates that in the next 20 years the town will have to spend \$30 million for public services.

Highlands must pass a land use ordinance if it is to maintain the town's "uniqueness," Cleveland recently told a Chamber of Commerce meeting.



According to Nantahala Power & Light Co., the power firm that services Highlands and four other southwestern counties, the growth rate of their service area has been 31 percent since 1981.

The tourism industry also is growing. It increased from a \$374 million business in 1971 to more than double that in 1988 — \$839.6 million. Vacationers now coming to WNC numbered 25.5 million last year traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway, 8.7

See CHOICES, Page 5A ♦

## Choices

### ♦ From Page 4A

million into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and 250,000 at Grandfather Mountain.

But tourism-recreation industry also has meant the loss of natural areas and forest lands to development, and with the automobile emissions, more air pollution.

Officials say Asheville stands a good chance of soon joining much larger cities that are mandated by the federal government to reduce the amount of ozone in the air. Last summer, a monitoring station downwind of downtown registered a record level of the lung-damaging pollutant.

At a time when there was little wind and a dense haze blanketed the city, a level of 118 parts per billion was recorded. A breath more and the valley would have exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standard of 120 ppb.

Once again, geographic features exacerbate the problem. Asheville is surrounded by mountains and therefore subject to temperature inversions about 70 percent of the time. That's when warmer air holds in the cooler air below it, effectively putting a lid on the valley that doesn't allow air pollution to escape.

"We're sitting in a bowl," said Ronald Boone of the Western North Carolina Air Pollution Control Agency.

But air pollution's effects on the mountains can be experienced in a more direct way with a trip to the highest peak east of the Mississippi, Mount Mitchell.

Dead and dying trees litter the slopes on the upper elevations. Researchers believe acid rain to be the primary culprit, and that they've seen the last generation of the spruce fir trees there.

"The trees on the tops of our highest mountains are dying wholesale," said Robert Bruck, a plant pathologist at N.C. State University.

Equipment that Bruck erected on the mountain peak in 1983 indicates the mountain is showered with 122 pounds of acidic sulfates and 65 pounds of nitrates per acre each

year. The pollutants are spewed into the air by automobiles and coal-burning industries and utilities.

Individual red spruce plots on Mount Mitchell that contained no dead trees in 1984 measured 8.5 percent dead in 1986 and 41.6 percent dead in 1987, he said.

A separate study showed that most of the trees at Balsam Gap on the parkway were healthy in 1979, "but now, virtually 98 percent of the entire spruce-fir ecosystem is dead," Bruck said.

"What's happening on the top of Mount Mitchell is just our advance warning," said Hugh Morton, owner of Grandfather Mountain. "And if we sit around and do nothing about it, it's going to get everything."

"We can see what's already happened in Canada. In Quebec they've got 30,000 dead lakes. I can't even imagine North Carolina with 1,000 dead lakes, let alone 30,000."

Not only does air pollution harm trees, it crumbles the historic buildings for which the Asheville area is known, said Rick King of the Biltmore House and Gardens.

The environmental assault on the region was the focus of last year's annual meeting of the Travel Council of North Carolina.

"We are going to stop this problem someday, somehow, or else we will not be in business in the travel industry," Tony Seamon, immediate past president of the council, said.

King added, "The No. 1 reason people give for travel is scenic beauty. And how scenic will the scenic beauty be without trees? And not only does acid rain kill the trees, but it kills the fish and lakes. Even if you're not concerned about the environment, just common business sense dictates that you have to preserve your investment."

Bill Eaker, an environmental planner with the Land-of-Sky Regional Council in Asheville, calls WNC one of the most unique areas on earth because of its natural beauty and diversity and said he believes the Forest Service and most other government agencies do a better job with mountain land than the private sector.

"I thank God that we have a considerable amount of land in public ownership in Western North Carolina regardless of recent criticisms of the federal government — the Forest Service and Park Service. The federal government is generally a good steward of the land and its public resources," Eaker said.

"I don't feel that we are doing a real good job of being good stewards of privately-owned lands," he said.

Eaker said that while public policy regarding land management is now under examination, more attention to the issue is needed and urged greater public education on environmental matters.

Reported by Michael Weaver, Mark Barrett, Bob Scott, Clarke Morrison, Paul Johnson and Jay Hensley.

□ □ □

Tomorrow in the Citizen:  
The Mountains' Largest Landholders



# Tourism Has Pros, Cons

By PAUL JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

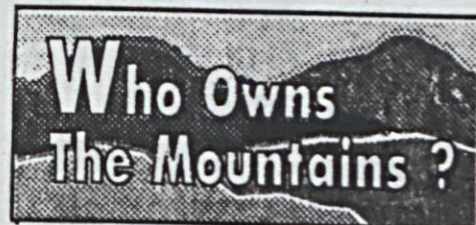
For Western North Carolina's economy and environment, tourism has become a double-edged sword.

The tourism industry has evolved into a mainstay for an area that has suffered economically, providing jobs in regions where there have been precious few opportunities in the past.

At the same time, the greater number of vacationers coming to the mountains has posed potential threats to the very beauty drawing them here. And even though tourism has aided an ailing economy in outlying counties, the jobs created are seasonal and provide low wages.

The concern over tourism stems in large part from different perspectives on how the land should be used, said Gary Brown of the Center for Improving Mountain Living at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee.

There are conflicts between those who want to use trees for lumber and those who want trees for sight-seeing, between those who want to hike in the mountains and those who want to develop them,



Public Vistas, Private Rights

Brown said.

What the dilemma comes down to is a rough equation — how many out-of-town guests can the mountains accommodate before tourism overloads the region?

Already there are multitudes coming to Western North Carolina for vacations — 25.5 million people last year on the Blue Ridge Parkway, 8.7 million in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 250,000 at Grandfather Mountain. Those numbers should increase as Asheville and other cities struggle to make it in a competitive tourism market.

Tourism has become an almost \$1 billion industry in the region. Travel expenditures increased 9.3 percent from 1987 to 1988, the state Department of Commerce reports, meaning that visitors spent an estimated \$839,604,000 in the 19-county region last year.

The big-money, mass-based modern tourism industry in Western North Carolina has evolved from

See TOURISM, Page 6A ♦

## Tourism

♦ From Page 1A

what was once an out-of-the-way outpost for well-off visitors.

In the latter part of the 19th century, Western North Carolina was hundreds of miles of forest dotted with isolated cities and towns. But the visual appeal of the Appalachian Mountains drew renowned and wealthy visitors such as the Vanderbilts and Rockefellers.

As more railroads and by-ways crossed the region in the 20th century, the area became more accessible to greater numbers of people.

In the early 20th century Asheville became a stop for people from the industrialized Northeast on their way to Florida, said John Winkendwerder, general manager of Ramada Inn-Central in Asheville and past chairman of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority.

Interstate highways developed in the early 1950s ignited tourism, and Asheville expanded its market as the super highways came to the mountains. But Asheville's market has changed radically over the past

30 years.

In the 1960s Asheville attracted mainly families, especially from Florida and from southeastern cities and towns with large segments of textile workers.

"There was no Disney World, no Six Flags. The competition was softer," Winkendwerder said.

In the 1970s Asheville's tourist picture began to change, in large part because of the development of theme parks in other parts of the country. Families began to go to those attractions, and a new type of vacationer came to Asheville.

"In the 1960s, 75 percent of people staying on a given summer night in Asheville had children," he said. "Today, 75 percent of the guests on a given summer night would not have children."

The future points to greater growth as Western North Carolina seeks to draw tourists from new markets. For example, this year the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority launched its first national advertising campaign, seeking to make Asheville a national tourist destination.

But the effort to promote tourism has begun to run into another

significant concern — the effort to protect the environment. Already warning signs have been posted.

"Population growth and increased travel and tourism are expected by many to place greater pressure on the region's fragile environment," the Regional Economic Strategy Project reported in January. "Air and water pollution are key concerns. Indeed, already we are seeing the loss of trees, attributed to air pollution, in the higher elevations."

The internal combustion engines in cars that bring people to the mountains result in greater air pollution, which can destroy plant life.

Also, vacationers generate two to three times as much solid waste as residents, said Paul Gallimore of the Long Branch Environmental Education Center in Buncombe County.

And then there is the controversy over some critics call visual pollution — signs or billboards.

Proponents of stricter billboard control say more stringent regulations are needed to prevent outdoor signs from ruining the beauty of the region. But billboard industry supporters say outdoor advertising is es-

sential to inform visitors about attractions and accommodations such as motels and restaurants.

On the economic front, tourism has created work for people who otherwise would not have jobs. In 1988, private sector tourism employment totaled 19,215 workers, or 10.5 percent of the region's work force.

Most employment associated with tourism is seasonal, allowing teen-agers to land summer work and adults to supplement their incomes with second jobs, said Joe Jones, president of the WNC Central Labor Body of the AFL-CIO.

The downside, however, is that tourism offers lower wages than manufacturing. And because the industry is seasonal, tourism provides no longevity.

"Once the job fades away, a person will apply for unemployment benefits," Jones said.

As the 21st century approaches, tourism will continue to be a central thread of the social and economic fabric of the mountains. But as concern about the environment continues to serve as a pressure, many will urge that the sculptors of tourism policies balance growth with preservation.



## Who Owns The Mountains?

# Asheville Man 'Thinks Globally, Acts Locally'

By CLARKE MORRISON  
Staff Writer

Jeff Fobes takes to heart the environmental slogan: "Think globally, act locally."

Thinking in global terms comes naturally to the 41-year-old Asheville resident. As the son of a career foreign service diplomat, Fobes spent a lot of time learning the ways and problems of other cultures.

He went to schools in Paris and India, worked with children in a leper colony, and lived and worked with emotionally disturbed children in inner-city America. He's volunteered at a community radio station and taught electronics.



FOBES

Fobes now works with his father consulting in international relations and with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. But a couple of years ago he decided it was time to "act locally" in Western North Carolina in a way that utilized his long-time interest in the media.

So in October 1987 he published the first issue of Green Line, a

monthly newspaper devoted to environmental and social matters. The publication's circulation has grown to more than 10,000, and has attracted a devoted following among those who care about the issues it covers.

"Local issues usually tie into global issues," he said. "People feel most powerful when they tackle a local issue, but in the background, these local issues have global relevance."

"You can be concerned about ozone in Western North Carolina, but that's a problem in many places."

Fobes makes almost no money on the venture. A core of volunteers help put together the newspaper at his home, and a "token" payment is made for major stories. Most of the budget is spent on printing and distribution.

"It's an idealistic venture; it will probably never make any money," he said. "It will always require philanthropic support."

"The mission is to promote environmental awareness and democracy through better community dialogue. We try to encourage the average citizen to be more involved in the public affairs of society, whether it's the educational process, sludge incinerators, water bonds or city council elections."



— FILE PHOTO

### Voice Of Protest

A string of clear-cutting opponents wind 1,000 feet of petitioners' signatures down College Street in Asheville in April's protest against management practices in national forests. The Western North Carolina Alliance, with its first chapter in Macon County in 1982, gathered 16,000 signatures on the petitions during the spring. The alliance now has chapters in other counties and an office in Asheville with two full-time employees.

# Polls Show Environment Now A National Concern

By CLARKE MORRISON  
Staff Writer

A number of recent polls reveal that environmentalism in the United States has become a mainstream concern, outranking all previous levels of interest.

Every trend is on the rise regarding the public's concern over specific environmental threats, frustration with government inaction, willingness to pay more taxes to curb pollution and the belief that not enough is being done.

The environment played a critical role in numerous Senate and House races in 1988, according to the Sierra Club.

Says pollster Lou Harris, "in 1992 or in 1996, a president will be chosen and elected with a pro-environmental stance as his primary identification. Such a prospect would have seemed impossible only a decade ago."

A Harris poll in February found that 68 percent of Americans were willing to pay higher taxes for "stricter control of acid rain and toxic waste dumping."

A Cambridge Reports poll shows that from 1982 to 1988, the number who say there is "too little government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection" rose from 35 percent to 53 percent. In addition, a majority of Americans agree that "we must sacrifice economic growth in order to protect the environment."

A 65 percent to 28 percent majority would be willing to pay \$100 a year more in taxes over the next decade "in order to clean up the toxic and hazardous waste problem in America," according to a CBS News/New York Time poll.

In stark contrast to his predecessor, President George Bush early on in his administration enjoyed a positive rating of 60 percent to 32 percent negative in his handling of environmental matters, in part because of his appointment of William Riley to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

But with the Alaskan oil spill, and a sense that Bush was too slow to commit resources to clean it up, Bush's rating dropped to 39 percent positive and 49 percent negative.

A Gallup poll found that while most voters were not concerned about the environment in 1970, about three-quarters of the electorate now express strong concern about environmental problems.

A survey completed in April by the Washington Post and ABC News found that nine in 10 Americans rate "taking stronger action to clean up the nation's air and water" a top priority.

Seventy-nine percent of the public believes the government too often gives in to business interests when it comes to protecting the environment, a poll by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman shows.



# THE ASHEVILLE CITIZEN

Dedicated to the Upbuilding of Western North Carolina

Friday, Sept. 8, 1989



**Involved.**  
Paul Gallimore, Millie Buchanan and Scott Parker (clockwise from top left) are involved with environmental issues in WNC.

— File Photos

## Environment Becomes Grassroots Issue

■ Sixth in a Series

By CLARKE MORRISON  
Staff Writer

Fed up with the unwillingness or inability of government to protect the environment, people are increasingly taking matters into their own hands, organizing groups to force bureaucracy to act.

And Western North Carolina's scenic beauty has made the region a natural hotbed of activism as awareness of problems caused by pollution and development has grown.

There was little in the way of an organized movement a decade ago in the mountains to plead the environment's case before regulators and lawmakers. But in recent years grassroots groups have sprouted with regularity in defense of air, land and water.

"People are realizing that their



### Public Vistas, Private Rights

communities are becoming more and more polluted, and they're the only ones that are going to do something about it," said Millie Buchanan of the Clean Water Fund of North Carolina, which opened an office in Asheville in 1986, two years after the group was founded in Charlotte.

The organization researches local environmental issues and tries to educate the public, said Buchanan, one of two staffers in the Asheville office. It is funded through founda-

tion grants and contributions.

"We try to help put backyard problems into the broader context of state and national environmental policy," she said. "We've had nearly a decade now in which government programs to protect the environment have become less and less effective. The amount of money and staff put into solving environmental programs has dwindled drastically during the '80s."

An issue that galvanized environmentalists in Western North Carolina was an announcement by the U.S. Department of Energy in 1986 that it was considering a 105-square-mile site in Buncombe, Haywood and Madison counties for a high-level nuclear waste dump.

"The proposal to put that in one of the prettiest valleys in the world just made people really mad and

showed them they are not isolated from broader environmental problems," Buchanan said.

Another motivation has been the issue of clear-cutting on national forest lands, she said. A group called the Western North Carolina Alliance has campaigned aggressively against clear-cutting, gathering 16,000 signatures on petitions this spring.

The first alliance chapter sprang up in Macon County in 1982 over concerns about proposed oil and gas leases on nearby national forest lands. Since then the group spawned chapters in several other counties, and last year established an office in Asheville with two full-time employees.

Alliance coordinator Mary Kelly sees a parallel between this area and another beautiful region encompass-

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## Who Owns The Mountains?

### Issue

#### ♦ From Page 1A

ing Santa Barbara, Calif., where she lived for 10 years. The city was placed under a growth moratorium, despite forecasts of doom by developers. Most everyone else, however, loved it, she said.

"There was a moratorium against growth, yet the town was just a paradise to live in," Kelly said. "People come to Asheville because of the setting. But if we become just another Charlotte or Atlanta, people will stop coming."

Growth issues are the subject of a series of public workshops the alliance plans to sponsor across the region later this year.

"Do we need to be two or three times the size we are now?" Kelly asked hypothetically. "Do we have to accept that, and what do we want to preserve as we grow? People should have more of a choice in deciding."

The growing concern over environmental issues isn't limited to Western North Carolina, said Peter Kirby, southeast regional director of the Wilderness Society. Membership has grown more than seven-fold since 1980 to more than 300,000, and that's not atypical for national conservation organizations, he said.

Kirby attributes the trend in part to more press coverage of environmental problems. The month after the Exxon oil spill in Alaska's formerly pristine Prince William Sound, nearly 30,000 people joined the Wilderness Society. And then there's the "anti-environmental record of the Reagan administration."

"There has just been a real flowering of local groups," he said. "Often they will spring up around a

particular project, like a proposed toxic waste dump. Then they will turn into something permanent and enduring. It's been impressive."

Jeff Fobes, a member of a group that led a successful campaign to defeat an Asheville bond issue that would have financed a water treatment plant on the French Broad River, sees a return of the '60s and the Vietnam era.

"Now, those people are older, they are much more experienced and knowledgeable. And they are used to being active, and not necessarily from a mainstream point of view."

Fobes, 41, in October 1987 established Green Line, a monthly newspaper devoted to environmental and social issues in Western North Carolina. Its circulation has grown to more than 10,000.

The publication's mission is "solution-oriented journalism," he said. It relies primarily on volunteers.

"Grassroots organizations are sprouting all over the place," Fobes said. "People want to get in on the act of governing. They see that governments are less and less able to cope with change in society. It's obvious no one is in control any more. No one can think far enough ahead."

Unbridled growth in the Asheville area prompted Scott Parker to charter a local chapter of the National Audubon Society in July 1987. The Elisha Mitchell chapter, named in honor of the man who determined that Mount Mitchell is the highest point east of the Mississippi, already has 630 members.

The group wasted little time finding a cause. Developers planned a shopping center at the east end of Beaver Lake on Merrimon Avenue that the chapter said would have

threatened a natural area. As opposition to the development mounted, the chapter raised nearly \$400,000 to buy the property. A nature study area and wildlife preserve are to be established there.

"That was a classic example of development-at-all-cost: Let's put up a shopping center anywhere, even if it's in front of a marsh and a lake," Parker said. "And we wouldn't have raised the kind of money we have if people weren't concerned about it."

"I think it has really come to a head. People have gotten so tired of having nothing to say about what's going on. They are looking around them and seeing the reason they moved here disappear. There are places that should be untouched by development. You can have a vibrant economy and still protect what people see as important."

Those involved in the fight to protect the environment have realized they are more effective when they join forces, said Paul Gallimore, director of the Long Branch Environmental Education Center in the Sandy Mush section of Buncombe County.

"Citizens have seen the results of being fragmented and not having organization," he said. "Since we've already tried anarchy, we saw we needed to have a more coherent strategy."

"It's easy to break a single arrow. But if you bundle together a group of arrows, it's almost impossible to break them. And if you have numbers of like-minded individuals speaking out, then you're likely to get a better hearing for your point of view."

□ □ □

Tomorrow in the Citizen & Times:  
Changing Face of the Mountains

## Environmental Groups In WNC

Western North Carolina has a number of groups interested in various environmental issues, including those listed below:

### Western North Carolina Alliance

Contacts: Mary Kelly, Ron Lambe; P.O. Box 18087, Asheville, N.C. 28814. (704) 258-8737.

### Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society

Contact: Scott Parker, P.O. Box 5456, Asheville, N.C., 28813. (704) 254-2094

### Clean Water Fund of North Carolina

Contacts: Millie Buchanan, Jenny Rominger; 138 E. Chesnut St. Asheville, N.C., 28801. (704) 251-0518

### Sierra Club

Contacts: Valerie Klemmer, 89 North Liberty St., Asheville, N.C., 28801, (704) 253-3665; or Bill Thomas, P.O. Box 272, Cedar Mountain, N.C., 28718. (704) 885-8229

### Western North Carolina Greens

Contact: Richard Harrison, P.O. Box 144, Asheville, N.C., 28802. (704) 254-6910

### Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

Contacts: Janet Hoyle, P.O. Box 88, Glendale Springs, N.C., 28629. (919) 982-2691; or Lou Zeller, 1301 N.C. 208, Marshall, N.C., 28753. (704) 656-2773.

### Forest Voices

Contact: Jinny Lindsey, P.O. Box 1275, West Jefferson, N.C., 28694. (919) 982-3633.

### Elk River Coalition

Contact: Lou Zeller, P.O. Box 291, Mars Hill, N.C., 28754. (704) 656-2773.

### Sandy Mush Community Club

Contact: Kate James, Route 2, Surratt Cove Road, Leicester, N.C., 28748. (704) 683-2014.

### Beaverdam Against Nuclear Dumping

Contact: Holly Hayes, P.O. Box 725, Canton, N.C., 28716.

### Polk Environmental Projects

Contact: Bill Holcombe, 115 Warrior Drive, Tryon, N.C., 28782. (704) 859-9837.

### Rutherford County Citizens For A Clean Environment

Contact: Tony Napoli, 125 Main St., Rutherfordton, N.C., 28139. (704) 287-5647.

### Crabtree Against Nuclear Trash

Contact: Ron Bradshaw, Route 1, Clyde, N.C., 28721. (704) 627-3356.

### The McDowell Radioactive Waste Task Force

Contact: Susan Goldsmith, P.O. Box 1107, Marion, N.C., 28752.

### Jackson County Save

Contact: Jody Friedman, P.O. Box 653, Dillsboro, N.C., 28725. (704) 586-8729.

### Madison Environmental Alliance

Contact: Bobbi Tousey, 21 Ridgeway Drive, Mars Hill, N.C., 28754 (704) 689-5228.

### Long Branch Environmental Education Center

Contact: Paul Gallimore, P.O. Box 132, Big Sandy Mush Creek, Leicester, N.C., 28748. (704) 683-3662.

### Burke Alliance For A Safe Environment

Contact: Anita Fox, Route 5, P.O. Box 425-F, Morganton, N.C. (704) 433-1148.

### North Buncombe Association Of Concerned Citizens

Contact: Gary Hensley, 4 Ebernicket Lane, Weaverville, N.C., 28787. (704) 645-9246.

### Concerned Neighbors of General Electric

Contact: Lucy King, Route 1, P.O. Box 174, Flat Rock, N.C., 28731. (704) 693-8991.