# Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area
Western North Carolina
www.blueridgeheritage.com

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
www.nps.gov

# The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area: A unique natural and cultural treasure.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area comprises the 25 westernmost counties and the Qualla Boundary (Cherokee Indian Reservation) in the state of North Carolina. The region encompasses nearly 11,000 square miles of mountains, forests, lakes, streams, small towns, farms and fields.

In designating Western North Carolina as a National Heritage Area in 2003, Congress recognized the cultural and natural resources of the region that played a significant role in the history of the United States and the state of North Carolina.

## Discover the natural scenic beauty of the mountains, foothills and forests of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.

Two of the most visited national parklands in the country lie within the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area — the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** and the **Blue Ridge Parkway**, known as "America's Favorite Drive."

The **Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest** in the **Nantahala National Forest** preserves one of the largest stands of old growth trees in the Eastern United States. The highest mountain east of the Mississippi River, **Mount Mitchell**, soars above the **Pisgah National Forest** and is one of the many state parks located within the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.

The famed **Appalachian Trail** stretches for 88 miles through the Nantahala National Forest, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Pisgah National Forest within the boundaries of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. Throughout the region visitors are enchanted by exquisite waterways and waterfalls, scenic byways and breathtaking mountain views.

Photo courtesy of NC Department of Commerce

Blue Ridge Parkway / Linville Viaduct

## Handcrafts and mountain music reflect the heart of Southern Appalachian culture.

Immigrant settlers brought with them their native cultural traditions, many of which blended over time into the unique culture of the Blue Ridge. These traditions, especially in handcrafts and music, have been passed down through generations and still thrive today.

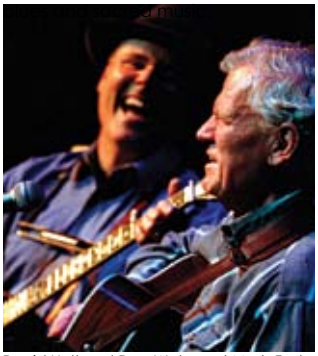
The **John C. Campbell Folk School** in Brasstown and **Penland School of Crafts** near Spruce Pine play important roles in preserving the arts and crafts traditions of the region.

The **Southern Highland Craft Guild**, one of the nation's premier craft organizations, is headquartered in the region.

The **Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual** in Cherokee represents more than 300 artists who create baskets, pottery, woodcarving, beadwork, jewelry, masks, dolls and other items of Cherokee traditional art.

A fertile meeting ground for European and African music traditions, the North Carolina mountains still ring with the sounds of the fiddle, banjo, string bands and cloggers, which can be heard everywhere from front porches to festival stages and town squares. The music includes lively strains of old-time, bluegrass, ballad singing,

Crafter at Penland School of Crafts
Photo courtesy of Penland School of Crafts



David Holt and Doc Watson at MerleFest
Photo courtesy of BanjoMan

Photo courtesy of Biltmore™

Biltmore Estate

## Museums, heritage sites and America's largest home.

More than 100 museums and heritage sites reflect the history, culture and arts of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. Among them is **Biltmore Estate**, known worldwide as "America's Largest Home." Located in Asheville, the estate was built by wealthy industrialist George W. Vanderbilt in the late 1800s. It is now operated as a private attraction that includes the mansion, gardens, vineyards, historic farm, crafts and music performances.

## Farming traditions preserve a beloved land.

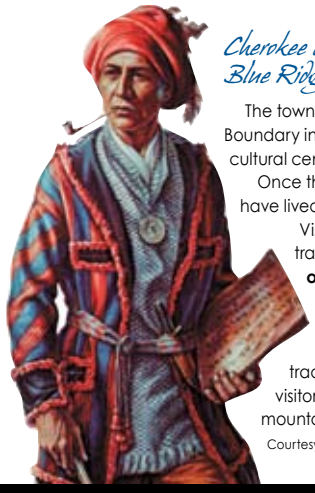
For thousands of years, Native Americans cultivated the fertile valleys of the North Carolina mountains, raising the "three sisters" — corn, beans and squash — which were the staples of thier diet. After the Revolutionary War, European and African immigrants brought their own farming traditions into the region, but also adopted many of the Cherokee ways.

Today, farmers and conservationists throughout the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area strive to maintain these agricultural traditions, resulting in a resurgence in locally grown food and the preservation of scenic agricultural landscapes.

Traditional crops continue to be cultivated along with many newer introductions — specialty crops such as Christmas trees, ornamentals, mushrooms, herbs and grapes. Viticulture (vineyards and winemaking) is among the region's fastest growing agricultural enterprises. There are more than 30 wineries open to the public in the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, many of which are located in the state's only two American Viticultural Areas. (See map and Web site on back.)

Photo courtesy of High Country Host

Avery County Christmas tree farm



## Cherokee culture thrives in the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.

The town of Cherokee, located within the Qualla Boundary in the far western part of the state, is the cultural center of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Once the largest of all Southern tribes, the Cherokee have lived in these mountains for thousands of years.

Visitors can learn about the history and cultural traditions of the Cherokee at the **Museum of the Cherokee Indian**, the **Oconoluftee Indian Village** living history exhibit and the outdoor drama, **Unto These Hills**.

Balancing the modern world with ancient traditions, the Cherokee welcome millions of visitors each year while stewarding the delicate mountain landscape that is their ancestral home.

Courtesy of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation

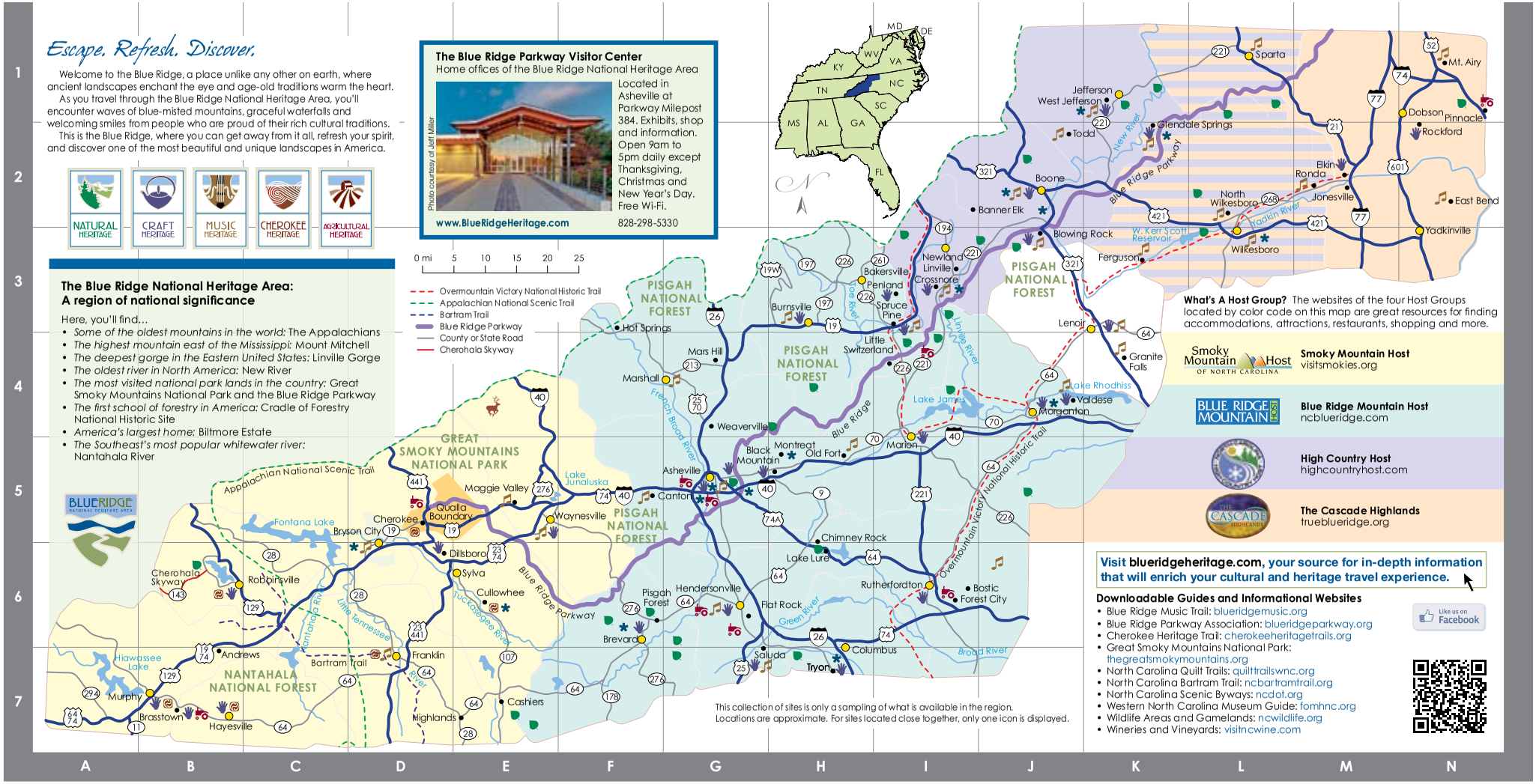
## *Outdoor adventures abound in the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.*

Hiking, biking, fishing, birding, rock climbing, paddling and snow skiing draw outdoor enthusiasts to the area. The Nantahala, French Broad, Nolichucky and Green rivers are among the region's waterways offering whitewater rafting, kayaking, canoeing and other water sports. Ski slopes of the High Country and the Cataloochee and Sapphire Valley regions beckon winter sports buffs. Bikers and hikers will find hundreds of miles of first-rate trails winding through the forests and alongside the rivers and streams. The minerals found throughout the region are famous worldwide, and visitors can hunt for treasures at the many gem mines in the area.

Photo courtesy of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation

Photo courtesy of High Country Host

Photo courtesy of Nantahala Outdoor Center




The unique character and culture of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area are built on its traditions of agriculture, craft and music, its natural beauty, and the ancient heritage of the Cherokee. Visit our website, **BlueRidgeHeritage.com**, for more information about heritage sites and attractions.

## NATURAL HERITAGE SITES

| SITE | TOWN | PHONE | GRID |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cradle of Forestry | Pisgah Forest | 828-877-3130 | F6 |
| Craggy Gardens | Parkway MP 364.6 | NA | H4 |
| Doughton Park | Parkway MP 238.5 | NA | L1 |
| Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest | Near Robbinsville | 800-470-3790 | B6 |
| Julian Price Memorial Park | Parkway MP 295 | 828-295-7591 | J3 |
| Linville Caverns | Marion | 828-756-4171 | I4 |
| Linville Gorge Wilderness & Falls | Parkway MP 316.4 | NA | I3 |
| Museum of NC Minerals | Parkway MP 331 | 828-765-2761 | I3 |
| Pearson's Falls | Saluda | 828-749-3031 | H7 |
| Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education | Near Brevard | 828-877-4423 | F6 |
| Roan Mountain | Near Bakersville | NA | I3 |
| W. Kerr Scott Environmental Education Center | Near Wilkesboro | 336-921-3390 | L3 |
| Whitewater Falls | Near Cashiers | NA | E7 |
| WNC Nature Center | Asheville | 828-298-5600 | G5 |

## CRAFT HERITAGE SITES

| SITE | TOWN | PHONE | GRID |
|---|---|---|---|
| Appalachian Heritage Crafters | Murphy | 828-835-9176 | B7 |
| Ashe Arts Center | West Jefferson | 336-846-2787 | K1 |
| Black Mountain Center for the Arts | Black Mountain | 828-669-0930 | G5 |
| Burke Arts Gallery | Morganton | 828-433-7282 | J4 |
| Caldwell Arts Council Gallery | Lenoir | 828-754-2486 | K3 |
| Center for Craft, Creativity & Design | Hendersonville | 828-890-2050 | G6 |
| Clay County Historical & Arts Council Old Jail Museum | Hayesville | 828-389-6814 | B7 |
| Dogwood Crafters | Dillsboro | 828-586-2248 | D6 |
| Energy Xchange | Burnsville | 828-675-5541 | H3 |
| Folk Art Center | Parkway MP 382 | 828-298-7928 | G5 |
| Guild Crafts | Asheville | 828-298-7903 | G5 |
| Heartwood Gallery | Saluda | 828-749-9365 | G7 |
| Heritage Arts Center | Valdese | 828-874-1849 | J4 |
| Hickory Ridge (Seasonal) | Boone | 828-264-2120 | J2 |
| Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree Store | Spruce Pine | 828-765-0571 | I3 |
| John C. Campbell Folk School | Brasstown | 800-365-5724 | B7 |
| McDowell Arts Council Gallery | Marion | 828-652-8610 | I5 |
| Mountain Made | Asheville | 828-350-0307 | G5 |
| Museum of North Carolina Handicrafts | Waynesville | 828-452-1551 | E5 |
| Northwest Trading Post | Parkway MP 258.6 | 336-982-2543 | K2 |
| Number 7 Cooperative | Brevard | 828-883-2294 | F6 |
| Old Depot Gallery | Black Mountain | 828-669-6583 | G5 |
| Parkway Craft Center at Moses Cone Manor | Parkway MP 294 | 828-295-7938 | J3 |
| Penland School of Crafts | Penland | 828-765-2359 | I3 |
| Rockford General Store | Rockford | 336-374-5317 | N2 |
| Rutherford County Visual Artists Guild | Rutherfordton | 828-288-5009 | I6 |
| South Mountain Crafts | Morganton | 828-433-2607 | J4 |
| Stecoah Valley Arts and Cultural Center | Robbinsville | 828-479-3364 | B6 |
| Toe River Arts Gallery | Burnsville | 828-682-7215 | H3 |
| Toe River Arts Gallery | Spruce Pine | 828-765-0520 | I3 |
| Transylvania Arts Gallery | Brevard | 828-884-2787 | F6 |
| Tryon Arts & Crafts | Tryon | 828-859-8323 | H7 |
| Tryon Fine Arts Center | Tryon | 828-859-8322 | H7 |
| Tucker's Streetscape Gallery | Lenoir | 828-759-0075 | K3 |
| Weaving Room and Gallery | Crossnore | 828-733-4660 | I3 |
| Yadkin Valley Craft Guild | Elkin | 336-835-2717 | M2 |

## MUSIC HERITAGE SITES

| SITE | TOWN | PHONE | GRID |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alleghany Jubilee/ Old Spartan Theater | Sparta | 800-372-5473 | L1 |
| Bryson City Depot | Bryson City | 828-488-3681 | D6 |
| Canton Pickin' in the Park | Canton | 828-646-3411 | F5 |
| Carolina Theatre | Spruce Pine | 828-766-5525 | I3 |
| Maggie Valley Opry House | Maggie Valley | 828-926-9336 | E5 |
| Marshall Railroad Depot | Marshall | 828-206-2436 | G4 |
| Monday Night Street Dance in Downtown Hendersonville | Hendersonville | 800-828-4244 | G6 |
| Mountain Gateway Museum | Old Fort | 828-668-9259 | H5 |
| Mountain Music Jamboree | Glendale Springs | 336-384-4079 | K2 |
| Mountain Street Dance | Waynesville | 828-456-3517 | E5 |
| O'Henry's Restaurant | East Bend | 336-699-8693 | N2 |
| Old Fort Mountain Music | Old Fort | 888-233-6111 | H5 |
| Old-Time Music Heritage Hall | Mount Airy | 336-786-7998 | N1 |
| Pickin' on the Square | Franklin | 828-524-2516 | D7 |
| Redding's Country Kitchen | Ronda | 336-984-3455 | M2 |
| Saluda Mountain Jamboree | Saluda | 828-749-3676 | G7 |
| Shindig on the Green | Asheville | 828-258-6101 | G5 |
| Sims Country Bar-B-Que | Granite Falls | 828-396-5811 | K4 |
| Smokey Creek Barbeque and Music Barn | Lenoir | 828-728-5398 | K3 |
| Stompin' Ground | Maggie Valley | 828-926-1288 | E5 |
| The Fiddlin' Pig | Asheville | 828-251-1979 | G5 |
| The Jones House | Boone | 828-262-4576 | J2 |
| The Old Rock School | Valdese | 828-879-2129 | J4 |
| The Town Center | Burnsville | 828-682-7209 | H3 |
| Todd General Store (May–Dec) | Todd | 336-877-1067 | J2 |
| Todd Mercantile (Jan–May) | Todd | 336-877-5401 | J2 |
| Voice of the Blue Ridge, Downtown Cinema Theater | Mount Airy | 336-786-7998 | N1 |
| Whippoorwill Academy and Tom Dooley Museum | Ferguson | 336-973-3237 | K3 |
| Wilkes Heritage Museum | Wilkesboro | 336-667-3171 | L3 |
| WKBC's Hometown Opry at Minton Music and Pawn | North Wilkesboro | 336-667-2274 | L2 |
| Woodlands Barbeque and Pickin' Parlor | Blowing Rock | 828-295-3651 | J3 |
| Young's Mountain Music | Burnsville | 828-675-4365 | H3 |

## CHEROKEE HERITAGE SITES

| SITE | TOWN | PHONE | GRID |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cherokee County Historical Museum | Murphy | 828-837-6792 | B7 |
| Judaculla Rock | Near Cullowee | NA | E6 |
| Junaluska Memorial & Museum | Robbinsville | 828-479-4727 | B6 |
| Mingo Falls | Cherokee | NA | D5 |
| Nikwasi Mound | Franklin | NA | D7 |
| Museum of the Cherokee Indian | Cherokee | 828-497-3481 | D5 |
| Nelson Heritage Park / Cherokee Homestead Exhibit | Hayesville | 828-389-3704 | B7 |
| Oconaluftee Indian Village and Cherokee Visitor Center | Cherokee | 800-438-1601 | D5 |
| Oconaluftee Visitor Center | Cherokee | 828-497-1900 | D5 |
| Qualla Arts and Crafts | Cherokee | 828-497-3103 | D5 |
| Unto These Hills (outdoor drama) | Cherokee | 828-497-2111 | D5 |

## AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

| SITE | TOWN | PHONE | GRID |
|---|---|---|---|
| Henderson County Farmers Curb Market | Hendersonville | 828-692-8012 | G6 |
| Historic Johnson Farm | Hendersonville | 828-891-6585 | G6 |
| Horne Creek Living Historical Farm | Pinnacle | 336-325-2298 | N1 |
| Mountain Home & Farm Museum | Hendersonville | 828-697-8846 | G6 |
| Mountain Farm Museum/ Mingus Mill | GSMNP | 828-497-1900 | D5 |
| NC Arboretum | Asheville | 828-665-2492 | G5 |
| Orchard at Altapass | Parkway MP 328.3 | 888-765-9531 | I4 |
| Rutherford County Farm Museum | Forest City | 828-248-1248 | I6 |
| WNC Farmers Market | Asheville | 828-253-1691 | G5 |

## OTHER SITES

| SITE | TOWN | PHONE | GRID |
|---|---|---|---|
| Basilica of Saint Lawrence | Asheville | 828-252-6042 | G5 |
| Ben Long Frescoes | Multiple | 336-838-1076 | H5, I3, J4, K1, K2, L3 |
| Biltmore Estate | Asheville | 877-245-8667 | G5 |
| BR Parkway Visitor Center | Parkway MP 384 | 828-298-5330 | G5 |
| Brevard Music Center (classical) | Brevard | 828-862-2100 | F6 |
| Foothills Equestrian Nature Center | Tryon | 828-859-9012 | H7 |
| Great Smoky Mountains Railroad | Bryson City | 800-872-4681 | D6 |
| Horn in the West | Boone | 828-264-2120 | J2 |
| Mountain Heritage Center | Cullowhee | 828-227-7129 | E6 |
| Tweetsie Railroad | Blowing Rock | 800-526-5740 | J2 |
| YMI Cultural Center | Asheville | 828-252-4614 | G5 |