

**TRANSLYVANIA COUNTY**

The French Broad River officially begins outside the little town of Rosman, N.C., where the North and West forks come together to give the river birth. Soon after, they are joined by the Middle and East forks.

Here, in Transylvania County (known as the "Land of the Waterfalls"), we find the headwaters of the French Broad River — wild, untamed, brimming with fish — and, when the water's up, offering some of the liveliest whitewater in the area. The headwaters are among the French Broad's least-appreciated treasures. While attention has tended to focus on the commercially run whitewater in Madison County, and on Asheville's urban riverfront, the headwaters region offers exceptional boating and fishing possibilities in a pristine setting.

In sharp contrast with the generally placid character of Transylvania's stretch of river, the North Fork offers skilled paddlers a thrilling seven-mile run, including class 4, 5 and 6 rapids, as well as several waterfalls (naturally). At the confluence of the North Fork and the French Broad (mile 0, USGS 218) stands **Headwaters Outfitters**, an information resource for boaters.

Human presence in the area has a lengthy history. The Estatoe Trail, a Cherokee "highway" that linked mountain settlements with the town of the same name (in what is now South Carolina), crossed the state line near Rosman, and passed through the site of present-day Brevard. Formerly the county seat, Rosman was once home to a tannery, near where the **Champion Park river access** now stands (mile 1.5, USGS 216.5).

Below Rosman, the river's 30-plus-mile course in Transylvania County flows almost exclusively through agricultural lands. In this early section of the river's journey, it is shallow, narrow and often overhung with a dense canopy of trees.

A few miles below Rosman sits the new **Lyons Mountain river access** (mile 4, USGS 214), at the recently rebuilt Lyons Mountain Bridge.

Near Hannah Ford Bridge, at a place called Bunker Hill, a skirmish is said to have been fought in 1811, as part of an ongoing land dispute known as the Walton War. In the early days of European settlement, poor correlation of land treaties, combined with the generally sketchy knowledge of this remote area, created a no-man's-land. Three states — North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia — quarreled repeatedly over jurisdiction and boundaries; the dispute was finally settled in 1813, when residents of the contested area petitioned the N.C. General Assembly to accept it as part of that state.

A few miles beyond (mile 9, USGS 209), **Headwaters Outfitters** is developing a privately owned campground and river access that will offer canoeing and camping.

Transylvania's stretch of river also witnessed the brief career of the **Mountain Lily**, an ill-fated attempt to run a steamboat line (billed as the highest in the world) from Brevard to Asheville in the 1870s.

After the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers got done digging ditches, blasting shoals and building jetties in hopes of creating a navigable river channel, Col. S.V. Pickens formed the French Broad Steamship Company and made plans to establish regular service. The facts of the case are uncertain, but after, at most, a few short trips, the **Mountain Lily** succumbed to a flood which left it buried in a sand

bank and undid all the Corps of Engineers' hard work, littering the river channel with stones from the jetties. Thus ended the only attempt to tame the headwaters.

A century later, however, in the mid-1960s, the Tennessee Valley Authority hatched a plan to build a series of dams in the French Broad River Valley, for flood control and recreational use. But local residents united in opposition to the scheme, and the TVA eventually gave it up and, instead, began funneling money through the Land-of-Sky Regional Council to improve the free-flowing river corridor. Each year, local volunteers pitch in to help with two river cleanups.

A few miles downstream from Bunker Hill, the **Island Ford river access** (mile 11, USGS 207) marks a historic river crossing. Pieces of old wagons are sometimes still retrieved here during river cleanups. At low water levels, paddlers may need to push their boats off the remains of several fords formerly in use along this stretch of river. On the outskirts of Brevard sits **Hap Simpson Riverfront Park** (mile 21, USGS 197).

The Davidson River, a major tributary, comes in on river left around mile 26 (USGS 192), just past the popular **Pisgah Forest access point** at the Wilson Road Bridge. Before joining the French Broad, the Davidson's pristine waters descend from the Blue Ridge, through Pisgah National Forest. A few miles farther on, the Little River comes in on river right.

Transylvania's stretch of river is also rich in recreational opportunities. Seven formal river access sites (some privately owned) line the river here, and others are under development at this writing. Some of these sites are only a few miles apart, making it easy to paddle and fish this stretch of river. There is good trout fishing from the headwaters down to Island Ford, and the stretch from Hap Simpson Park to Pisgah Forest is particularly popular for muskie fishing. The adjacent Pisgah National Forest also offers superb and varied recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, hiking and mountain biking. For a short stretch just above the **Blantyre river access** (mile 34, USGS 184), the French Broad follows the county line, before passing into Henderson County.

**TRANSLYVANIA COUNTY RIVER ACCESS SITES:**

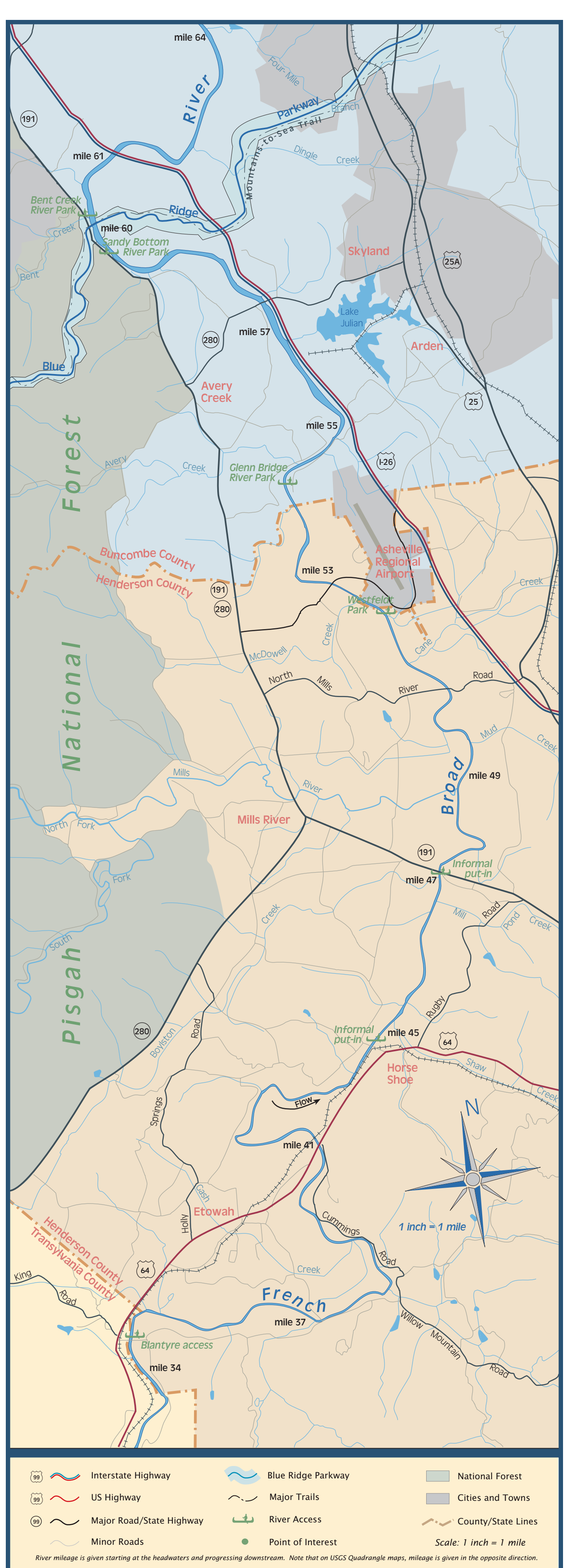
- Headwaters Outfitters (mile 0, USGS 218)
- Champion Park (mile 1.5, USGS 216.5)
- Lyons Mountain access (mile 4, USGS 214)
- Headwaters Outfitters access (mile 9, USGS 209)
- Island Ford access (mile 11, USGS 207)
- Hap Simpson Riverfront Park (mile 21, USGS 197)
- Pisgah Forest access (mile 26, USGS 192)
- Privately owned access (mile 28, USGS 190)



A tranquil stretch of river in Transylvania County.



The only known photograph of the ill-fated Mountain Lily.



**HENDERSON COUNTY**

Passing into Henderson County, the river veers sharply east for several miles, then northwest. At McLean Bridge (on Highway 64), it executes a distinctive "horseshoe" figure, near the town of the same name. The French Broad's approximately 20-mile Henderson County stretch runs mostly through rich agricultural bottom land, which is periodically replenished when the river floods. Though slightly wider than in Transylvania County, the river here is still relatively narrow, with a canopy of trees overhead. These conditions produce numerous "strainers" (fallen trees blocking the river channel), and anyone paddling this stretch of river should keep a sharp watch for such hazards. Organized river cleanups periodically remove some strainers; storms and floods, however, continue to create new ones. Boaters should also be aware of periodic water-quality problems near the water-treatment facility at Etowah.



Boaters enjoy Henderson County's gentle waters (photo by Sharon Ponder, Resort Photo).

Around mile 49 (USGS 169), the Mills River, a major tributary, joins the French Broad. A distinctive line is visible in the river where the two streams meet.

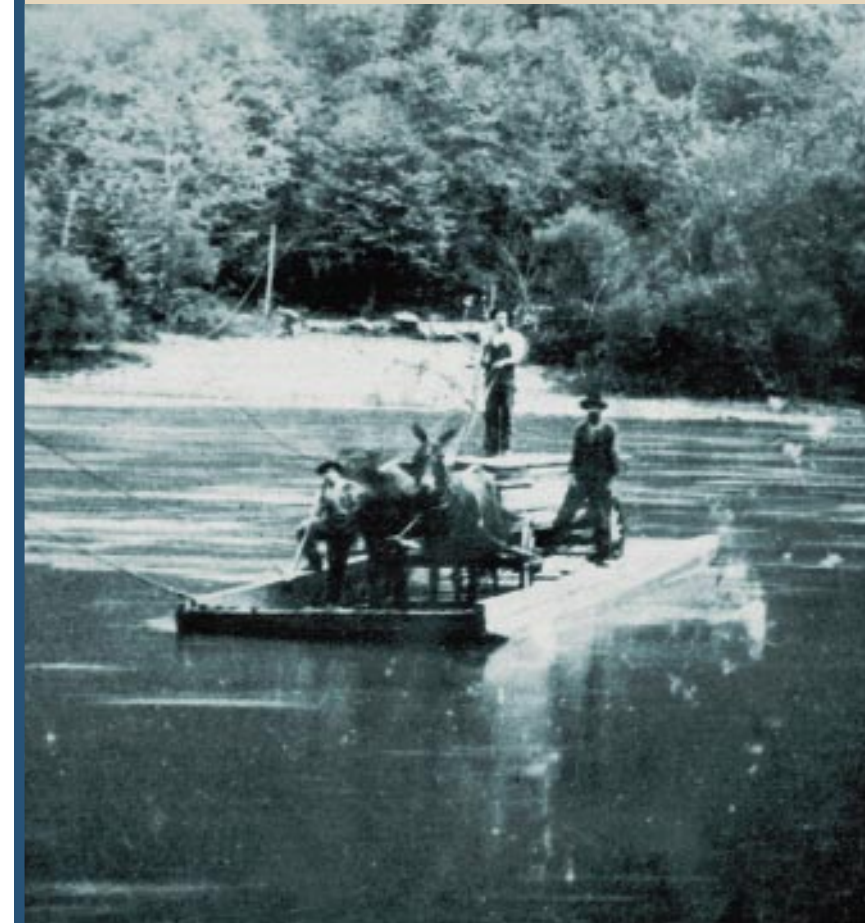
The Mills has its roots in the adjacent Pisgah National Forest, flowing through a fertile agricultural valley before feeding into the French Broad. The more protected nature of the Mills River watershed was not lost on the members of the Asheville-Buncombe Water Authority, who, searching for a new drinking-water source, forged a historic partnership with Henderson County in 1994. For its part, Henderson gained access to the Authority's water-treatment infrastructure. The new Regional Water Authority of Asheville, Buncombe and Henderson bought a 324-acre parcel that fronts on both rivers; construction of a water-treatment facility began in 1997.

Even in a region as water-rich as this one, pure drinking water is increasingly in short supply. Asheville, Buncombe and Henderson have taken a historic step toward regional sharing of this key resource. And, by ensuring an ample water supply, they have helped make the Henderson/Buncombe portion of the French Broad the fastest-growing corridor in the region.

Henderson's stretch of river is also rich in history. Some say that timbers from the ill-fated Mountain Lily (see Transylvania County section), or perhaps from a boathouse, were incorporated into the French Broad Baptist Church (in the Mills River area), which is said to be the oldest in Western North Carolina. It's also been said that the old steamer's bell wound up in one of the local churches, though the facts of the case are murky. In both Transylvania and Henderson counties, large rock structures — the remains of jetties built by the Corps of Engineers in the last century — are visible at low water. And the historic Johnson Farm, now a museum, sits just a couple of miles from the river, on N.C. 191.

Just past the Mills River, Mud Creek enters on river right. Local river enthusiasts have long dreamed of clearing out Mud Creek, so that one could paddle from downtown Hendersonville to the French Broad, and then all the way to Tennessee. But longstanding siltation problems and illegal dumping have interfered with recreational use of the tributary.

Henderson County's stretch of river is bounded by a pair of river-access parks. At the southern end stands **Blantyre** (mile 34, USGS 184), a modest facility now managed by the Wildlife Resources Commission. At the northern end, just before the Buncombe County line, lies **Westfeldt Park** (mile 51.75, USGS 166.25), which sits on land donated by a family with deep roots in the area. Both these parks offer parking and boat ramps; Westfeldt, in addition, includes a boardwalk, picnic tables and primitive toilet facilities.



Flat-boat ferries like this one were once common on the French Broad.

Boaters not wishing to cover the entire 20 miles, however, sometimes make use of two bridge crossings — **Johnson Bridge** (on Banner Farm Road, near Horse Shoe) and **Kings Bridge** (on Highway 191). Though not official river-access sites, and offering no amenities, these two points create multiple possibilities for shorter river runs.

There has also been talk of eventually developing an access site at the confluence of the Mills and the French Broad rivers, on a portion of the Regional Water Authority's property. The Mills River area is already a popular outdoor-recreation destination, drawing hikers, campers, fishing enthusiasts and mountain bikers, who enjoy the pristine scenery and varied terrain. The U.S. Forest Service has a campground on the North Mills River.

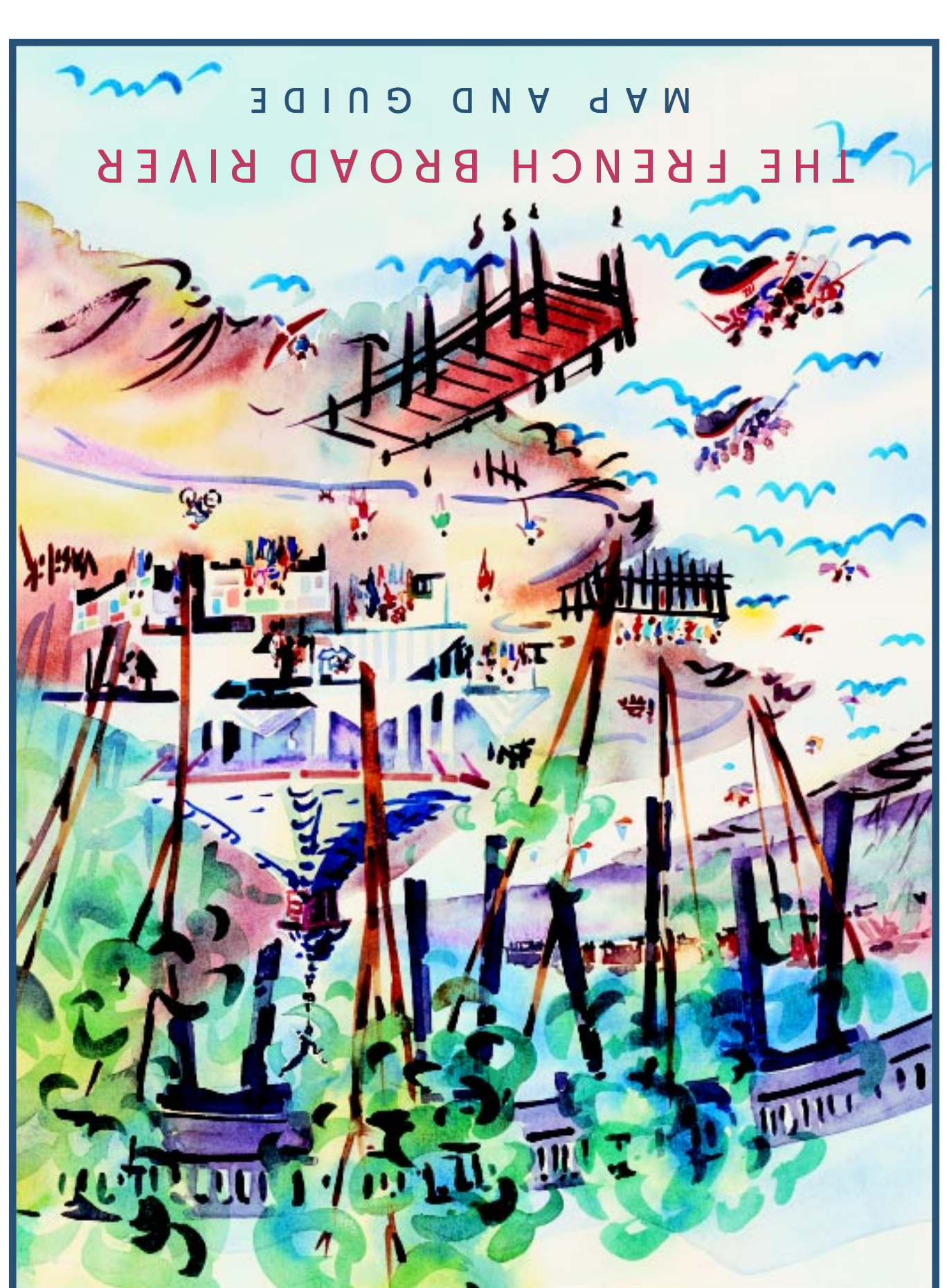
Throughout the river's Henderson County run, it is never more than a couple of miles from the boundary of Pisgah National Forest.

**HENDERSON COUNTY RIVER ACCESS SITES:**

- Blantyre access (mile 34, USGS 184)
- Westfeldt Park (mile 51.75, USGS 166.25)

**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**

- Glenn Bridge River Park (mile 54, USGS 164)
- Sandy Bottom River Park (mile 59.5, USGS 158.5)
- Bent Creek River Park (mile 60, USGS 158)

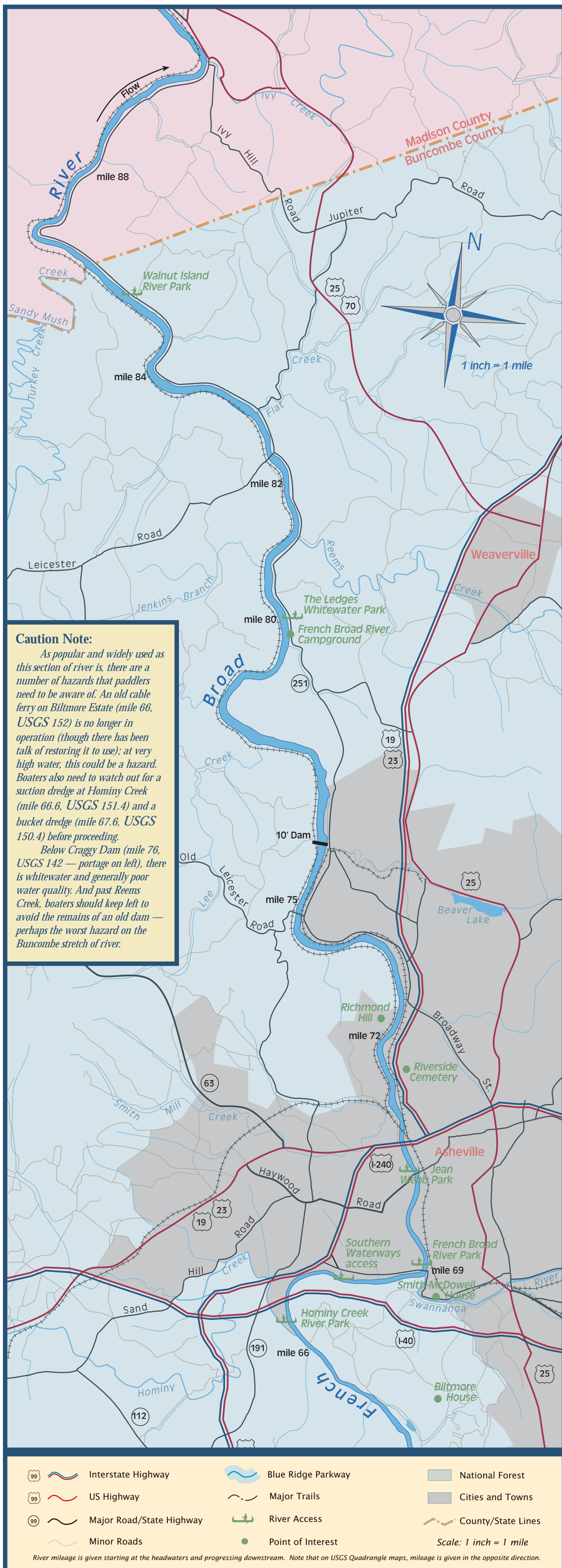


This project was partly funded by Adopt-A-Trail grants from the Trails Program of the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, and by a grant from the Cross Creek Foundation.

This guide is dedicated to the countless outfitters, paddlers, wildlife lovers, fishing enthusiasts, hikers, bikers, picnickers, poets and dreamers whose love of the French Broad River helped make this map possible.

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## BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Starting around the Buncombe County line, the river becomes much wider, as it flows through the fabled Biltmore Estate. **Glenn Bridge River Park** (mile 54, *USGS 164*) lies just beyond the county line.

A few miles farther on (mile 60, *USGS 158*), the Blue Ridge Parkway crosses the river on a high bridge, near the confluence with Bent Creek. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail, an ambitious project that will eventually span the entire state of North Carolina, crosses the river here.

The Bent Creek area is a hotbed of recreational activity. Two river parks — **Sandy Bottom** (mile 59.5, *USGS 158.9*) and **Bent Creek** (mile 60, *USGS 158*) — offer easy access, and the river runs adjacent to a section of Pisgah National Forest that includes an extremely popular mountain-biking area, as well as hiking trails, picnic tables and the artificial Lake Powhatan, which offers swimming, fishing and camping facilities. Adjacent to both the national forest and the Parkway, the North Carolina Arboretum is being developed as a world-class showcase and repository for the region's many indigenous plant species, with special gardens, hiking trails, greenhouses and a visitors' center.

Around mile 64 (*USGS 154*), George W. Vanderbilt's imposing mansion — the largest privately owned residence in the U.S. — can be spotted on river right.

From about mile 66-73 (*USGS 152-145*), the river flows through the city of Asheville, whose tall buildings can occasionally be glimpsed. Yet even here, the river corridor remains surprisingly green and peaceful, a linear oasis amid the surrounding urban environment.

Several river parks, plus one privately owned site, provide excellent recreational access within the city limits. Right at the city line sits **Hominy Creek River Park** (mile 66, *USGS 152*). A couple of miles farther on, **Southern Waterways** (mile 68, *USGS 150*) has an outpost which also offers camping and picnicking; though privately owned, the access is available for public use. Nearby sits the 39-acre former Asheville Motor Speedway property, donated to the city of Asheville by RiverLink in 1998 — the largest dollar-value donation in the city's history. It will be developed as a public river access, featuring athletic fields and greenway connections with Hominy Creek River Park and the French Broad River Greenway (eventually creating a roughly six-mile stretch of riverfront greenway).

Just down Amboy Road — and straddling a 90-degree bend in the river — stands the handsome **French Broad River Park** (mile 69, *USGS 149*), created by RiverLink in 1994. Strategically perched at the confluence of the French Broad and Swannanoa rivers, the park is the showpiece of the unfolding French Broad River Renaissance. With its stylish gazebo (recalling the turn-of-the-century architecture of the long-vanished Riverside Park), French Broad River Park serves notice that the urban riverfront has entered a new era.

Developed in stages as funds have become available, the park includes the French Broad River Greenway, Asheville's first. Now being extended along Amboy Road, the next phase of park development will include boat and fishing access, picnic facilities, trails and an outdoor classroom over the wetlands, emphasizing the river's role as teacher. RiverLink will continue to implement the Greenways Master Plan developed by acclaimed landscape architect Edward Durrell Stone Jr.

At the heart of the urban riverfront sits Warehouse Studios, home of RiverLink and several artists' studios. Around the corner sits **Jean Webb Park** (mile 70, *USGS 148*), a low-budget demonstration project that helped spark the river revival.



The Anything That Floats Boat Parade puts color on the water.

Nearby, the old Cotton Mill — now owned by RiverLink — is a living symbol of an urban area in transformation. Decimated by a tragic fire in 1995, much of the historic structure — a remnant of the riverfront's industrial past — is still awaiting redevelopment. But one restored wing is home to artists and other tenants, serving as an anchor and catalyst for future riverfront development.

A lively arts-and-crafts community has established itself in the River District, turning the old warehouses and other structures lining the river into studios where the Southern Appalachians' rich artistic heritage is kept alive. Periodic Studio Strolls co-sponsored by RiverLink and the River District Studios encourage shoppers to explore these venues and purchase their wares.

On the edge of the district stands Smith Bridge, named for James McConnell Smith, who erected the first permanent bridge across the river in the 1820s or '30s (his fine brick house, the oldest in Asheville, is now the Smith-McDowell Museum).

North of the city, we encounter the first of three dams on the French Broad (see caution notes for Buncombe and Madison counties), as well as several more river parks. The privately owned **French Broad River Campground** (mile 79.5, *USGS 138.5*) offers riverside camping and rents kayaks, canoes and inner tubes. Nearby, **The Ledges Whitewater Park** (mile 80, *USGS 138*) includes a slalom course for paddlers, built with funds raised by RiverLink. Dedicated in 1998, the course will be used for competitions and training; picnickers at the park may enjoy watching paddlers practice their moves. Finally, **Walnut Island River Park** (mile 86, *USGS 132*) signals the approach of the Madison County line.

This portion of the river corridor is also popular with cyclists. Local bike clubs lead regularly scheduled rides starting at The Ledges and continuing north to Marshall. The scenic road twists and winds its way northward, hugging the rocky cliffs of the French Broad River gorge and offering periodic glimpses of the dancing waters.

Recreational use of the urban section of the French Broad is showcased each year during RiverFest, a longstanding community celebration held as part of French Broad River Month in June. The festival features various boat races, as well as the Riverfront Triathlon, a running/paddling/biking event.

Buncombe's stretch of river is exceptionally accessible to users, with ten developed access sites (some privately owned) in about 32 miles of river. Additional parks have been proposed for Pearson Bridge (near Richmond Hill, a restored historic mansion that's now an inn and conference center) and in Woodfin (at a five-acre site donated to the town for a public access).

Many of these facilities also offer opportunities for picnicking, fishing and simply watching the water flow by.

**BUNCOMBE COUNTY RIVER ACCESS SITES:**  
 (Shown on Henderson County panel)  
 • Glenn Bridge River Park (mile 54, USGS 164)  
 • Sandy Bottom River Park (mile 59.5, USGS 158.5)  
 • Bent Creek River Park (mile 60, USGS 158)  
 (Shown on Buncombe County panel)  
 • Hominy Creek River Park (mile 66, USGS 152)  
 • Southern Waterways access (mile 68, USGS 150)  
 • French Broad River Park (mile 69, USGS 149)  
 • Jean Webb Park (mile 70, USGS 148)  
 • French Broad River Campground (mile 79.5, USGS 138.5)  
 • The Ledges Whitewater Park (mile 80, USGS 138)  
 • Walnut Island River Park (mile 86, USGS 132)



Paddlers working out at The Ledges Whitewater Park (photo by John Fletcher, Asheville Citizen-Times).



## MADISON COUNTY

By the time it gets to Madison County (mile 87, *USGS 131*), the French Broad is substantially wider — and about to get wilder. Forsaking the relative calm of Asheville's urban riverfront, the French Broad in Madison carries more water and drops more sharply, offering manifold challenges to boaters.

Just after the river enters Madison, it veers left at Bailey Bend, named for an old Madison County family that owned land there. In the early 1920s, Jesse James Bailey served two terms as Madison County Sheriff (and, later, one as Buncombe County Sheriff), gaining a formidable reputation as a slayer of whiskey stills. Boaters should be especially alert to a pair of dams outside the town of Marshall (see caution note, below). Be prepared for a lengthy portage around both of these hazards.

At Barnard, near the confluence with Big Pine Creek, the river enters Pisgah National Forest, through which it meanders for the next 34 miles, emerging just past Huff Island in Tennessee. Madison County maintains a public river access at **Barnard** (mile 100.5, *USGS 117.5*), named for a man who ran a stand there for drovers on the old Buncombe Turnpike. Many paddlers and commercial outfitters put in here for the whitewater run to Hot Springs (see caution note, below), which includes some class 3 rapids — and even, when the water's up, one class 4, Frank Bell Rapid (named for a legendary paddler who is said to have run the French Broad from its headwaters all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, around 1920).

For a shorter, gentler run, one may take out at **Stackhouse** (mile 105, *USGS 113*), where the Forest Service has a primitive access site (see caution note, below). At this writing, preliminary planning has begun for proposed improvements to the site. Amos Stackhouse built a house, store and sawmill here after the Civil War. The original home burned in the 1920s, but a grand Victorian structure he built in 1904 is still visible from the river.

Just below Stackhouse, around mile 106 (*USGS 112*), Big Laurel Creek comes in on river right. When the water's up, this wildwater stream offers a spectacular and scenic paddling adventure, including several class 5 rapids. Near the Laurel/French Broad confluence stand the ruins of Runion, an old logging community now smothered by the encroaching forest.

At Hot Springs, another lively tributary, Spring Creek, enters the French Broad. At high water, Spring Creek also offers an exciting run. Both these streams are for highly skilled and experienced boaters only, however.

Overall, recreational use of the river and its tributaries has grown dramatically in recent years. **Nantahala Outdoor Center** (mile 109, *USGS 109*) maintains a parking area for boaters and hikers at Hot Springs (please park in the designated area only), and many other outfitters also serve this stretch of the French Broad. But the river is still an underutilized resource in North Carolina — and even more so in Tennessee.

The little town of Hot Springs (population 535) enjoys a special place in French Broad River history. Originally known as Warm Springs, the town was already a thriving health resort by the early 1800s; the completion of the Buncombe Turnpike in 1828 drew still more people. Throughout the 19th century, a steady stream of wealthy visitors came to "take the waters" and enjoy the entertainments provided by a series of luxury hotels built adjacent to the thermal springs, along the banks of the French Broad.

During the Civil War, Warm Springs served as the headquarters of Confederate Provisional Forces under General Davis, until the town was captured by federal troops in 1863. The 1880s saw a further rise in the town's fortunes, sparked by the arrival of the railroad in 1882. After the old Patton Hotel burned down in 1884, an even grander hostelry, the Mountain Park Hotel, was built. Among the elegant resort's multiple attractions was the first golf course in North Carolina. Around this time, the town's name was changed to Hot Springs.

The Mountain Park burned down in 1920, and the end of the sanitarium boom sent the little town into decline. But in recent years, Hot Springs has been experiencing a revival. It now boasts a number of bed-and-breakfasts, as well as expanded dining opportunities. And, after more than 40 years, the springs themselves are once again available for public enjoyment. There's a lot to like in Hot Springs. The Appalachian Trail runs right down the main street, and the surrounding area offers abundant recreational opportunities, including camping, hiking, fishing and mountain biking, as well as paddling. In addition to the thermal baths themselves, the **Hot Springs Spa** also operates a private campground in Hot Springs, which offers campsites and primitive cabins right along the French Broad. About four miles downstream is the **Murray Branch river access** (mile 113, *USGS 105*).

About two miles farther on, at the confluence with Paint Creek, stands Paint Rock, named for the human and animal figures that formerly adorned it, said to have been painted by the Cherokee. In 1793, a blockhouse was erected here to protect early settlers from attack. Past Paint Rock, the river enters Tennessee.

**MADISON COUNTY RIVER ACCESS SITES:**  
 • Barnard access (mile 100.5, USGS 117.5)  
 • Stackhouse access (mile 105, USGS 113)  
 • Nantahala Outdoor Center access (mile 109, USGS 109)  
 • Murray Branch access (mile 113, USGS 105)



Riverside Park before the 1916 flood (photo courtesy of North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library).

## A RIVER REBORN

The French Broad River is this historic region's lifeline, tying together dispersed communities and linking diverse natural and human-made wonders. Water source, place, job creator and major attraction, the river is, above all, a living symbol of our common destiny.

Hikers, birders, picnickers, poets, boaters and fisherfolk can splash and play, kick back and dream, beside these flowing waters. Shoppers, students, artists and history buffs can glean tantalizing glimpses of the region's diverse heritage, illuminating its storied past and dynamic present. Increasingly, local governments are rediscovering the value of this shared resource. And visionary entrepreneurs are helping the river regain its key position in the regional economy.

Like merging streams that feed the swelling waters, this budding synergy is shaping a brave future for the French Broad and its tributaries. RiverLink, the regional nonprofit that's spearheading the river renaissance, invites you to launch your own voyage of discovery.

### Historic Riches

From the rugged slopes of some of the oldest mountains on earth, the French Broad River and its tributaries descend, carving lush, fertile valleys along the winding, 117-mile corridor through Western North Carolina.

The Cherokee and their predecessors knew the river well. They named it *Agiqua* ("Long Man"), and its tributaries were his "chattering children." For thousands of years, these first inhabitants hunted the forested slopes of the French Broad River gorge, fished the river's rushing waters, and farmed and built villages amid the rich bottom land. The Swannanoa, a major tributary, was also heavily settled. Today, the remains of more than 20 archaeological sites stand mute along the riverbanks, awaiting exploration.

Hernando De Soto's expedition passed through the area in 1540, in search of gleaming gold. They never found it, and soon headed west. But in their wake came first a trickle and then a flood of other visitors.

Early European settlers dubbed the river the French Broad, because its wide waters flowed into what was then French territory to the west. In the 1780s, the first white settlers crossed the Blue Ridge: William Moore made a homestead on Hominy Creek, and Samuel Davidson farmed the rich land along the Swannanoa.

More settlers followed, drawn by the river's song. In the 1820s, the Buncombe Turnpike was built, and farmers in Kentucky and Tennessee began driving livestock through the mountains, following the river's course en route to the great ports of Charleston and Savannah, farther south. Drovers herded up about 100,000 hogs a year along the busy road, traveling between "stands" that later grew into towns, and stagecoaches carried passengers and mail.

In the 1880s, the railroad arrived, opening the door to hordes of wealthy visitors who traveled the river corridor. One of them, George Vanderbilt, created the nation's largest private residence and first school of forestry here. Other visionaries soon followed. By the turn of the century, Asheville's Riverside Park had become the favored haunt of fashionable ladies and elegant gents. But a fire in 1915 badly damaged the park, and after the Great Flood of 1916, a battered city turned its back on the riverfront.

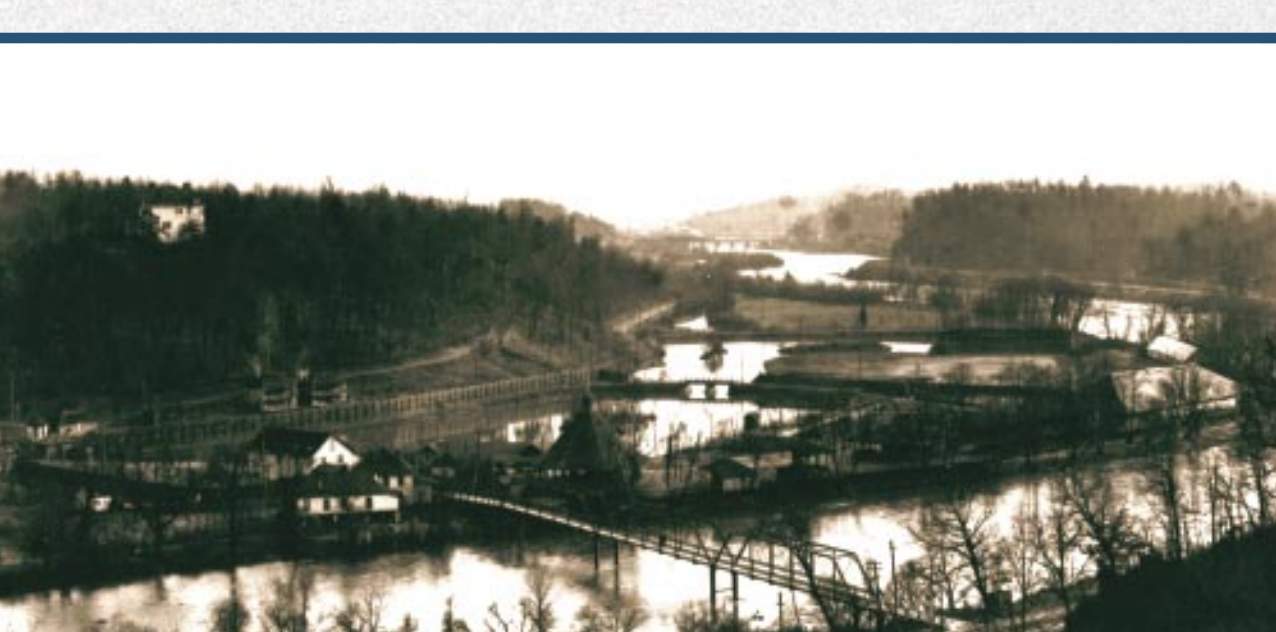
Today, however, the French Broad is regaining a central place in the life of this community, thanks to enhanced environmental awareness, renewed appreciation of the area's unique heritage, and increased demand for recreational space.

### A Place to Play

The Cherokee called the French Broad's thrilling whitewater section *Tabkeyastee* ("where they race"). Today, private boaters and commercial outfitters are giving those words new meaning.

The French Broad River is a priceless recreational resource. From Champion Park in Rosman to Hominy Creek in Asheville, it is a designated North Carolina River Trail — the state's first. And much of the river's course lies within sight of national forest lands, providing opportunities for camping, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, fishing and hunting. A string of river access parks offer facilities for boating, fishing, picnicking, bird watching and quiet contemplation. (See map for locations. Most formal access sites include a parking area and a boat launch; some also offer picnic tables; few have restrooms.) And RiverLink's French Broad River Yacht Club, open to anyone who has been on the river even once, is opening many people's eyes to the French Broad's tremendous recreational potential.

The river is our teacher, our inspiration. It whispers to us of our shared past, and its rushing waters plunge ahead, embracing a shining future that they help create.



Riverside Park before the 1916 flood (photo courtesy of North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library).

**For More Information...**

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 Web page: www.headwatersoutfitters.com

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**Nantahala Outdoor Center**  
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 Bryson City NC 28713-9114  
 (800) 232-7238  
 P.O. Box 398, Hot Springs NC 28743  
 (828) 622-7260  
 Web page: www.noc.com

**A WORD ABOUT SAFETY**  
 The French Broad River is safely enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages each year. But moving water is inherently dangerous, and falling trees, rocks, flooding, dams and other artificial structures may create additional hazards. Before launching your river adventure, make sure you have the training, equipment and information you need to enjoy a safe outing. Never go alone, and make sure someone knows about your plans. Talk to local outfitters about the stretch of river you plan to explore, and consult books (such as *Carolina Whiteswater*, by Bob Benner) for detailed information. If you're planning a longer trip, be aware that camping opportunities are limited, and much of the land — including islands in the river — is privately owned. Though quick to share its treasures, this vulnerable ecosystem also needs your help. Don't take styrofoam or glass on the river. Enjoy viewing the river corridor's abundant wildlife — but leave the animals alone. And, finally, try to honor the privacy of others you encounter in your journeying.