

SHINING ROCK WILD AREA - NORTH CAROLINA
PROPOSAL

This report describes a Forest Service proposal to establish the Shining Rock Wild Area located near Asheville, North Carolina, comprising 13,400 acres of rugged wilderness. The area has long been considered for special management as a Wild Area under Secretary of Agriculture's Regulation U-2.

It is located in Haywood County, Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina, about 20 miles southwest of Asheville, North Carolina. The entire area is north of Pisgah Ridge along which is located the Blue Ridge Parkway. It is on the headwaters of Pigeon River, a tributary of Tennessee River.

The area has outstanding wilderness values including scenic mountains, waterfalls, beautiful flowering trees and shrubs of many species and varieties, with excellent trout fishing streams and deer and bear hunting grounds.

The proposed Shining Rock Wild Area and its terrain, boundary, and relation to surrounding features are shown on the attached map.

The outstanding topographic feature is Shining Rock Mountain, the crest of which is an outcropping of white quartz - hence its name. Cold Mountain, a conical-shaped peak, reaches an elevation of 6,030 feet. These mountains are unique geological formations. The topography is precipitous on the lower slopes of Shining Rock and undulating with comparatively gentle slopes along Shining Rock Ledge. Elevation extremes are 3,500 feet near the mouth of Dry Branch and 6,030 feet on Cold Mountain. There are many scenic waterfalls within the recommended boundaries.

Forest Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Southern Region - 8 - Atlanta, Ga.

The proposed Wild Area has outstanding deer, bear, and grouse populations. This is primarily due to its ecological stage. The natural cover provides an abundance of browse and fruit. Existing wildlife food plots would be left as they are. There would be no further cultivation nor cutting of vegetation. Rabbits and grouse are the predominant small game species. The game habitat is exceptionally good. The area has not been heavily hunted in the past. As a wilderness-type area, with only horseback and foot access, the deer, bear, and other game species would become increasingly plentiful.

The area has several native brook trout streams. Stream quality for trout is considered exceptional for this locale. Hunting and fishing would be permitted in accordance with local laws and regulations, but no motorized vehicles would be permitted.

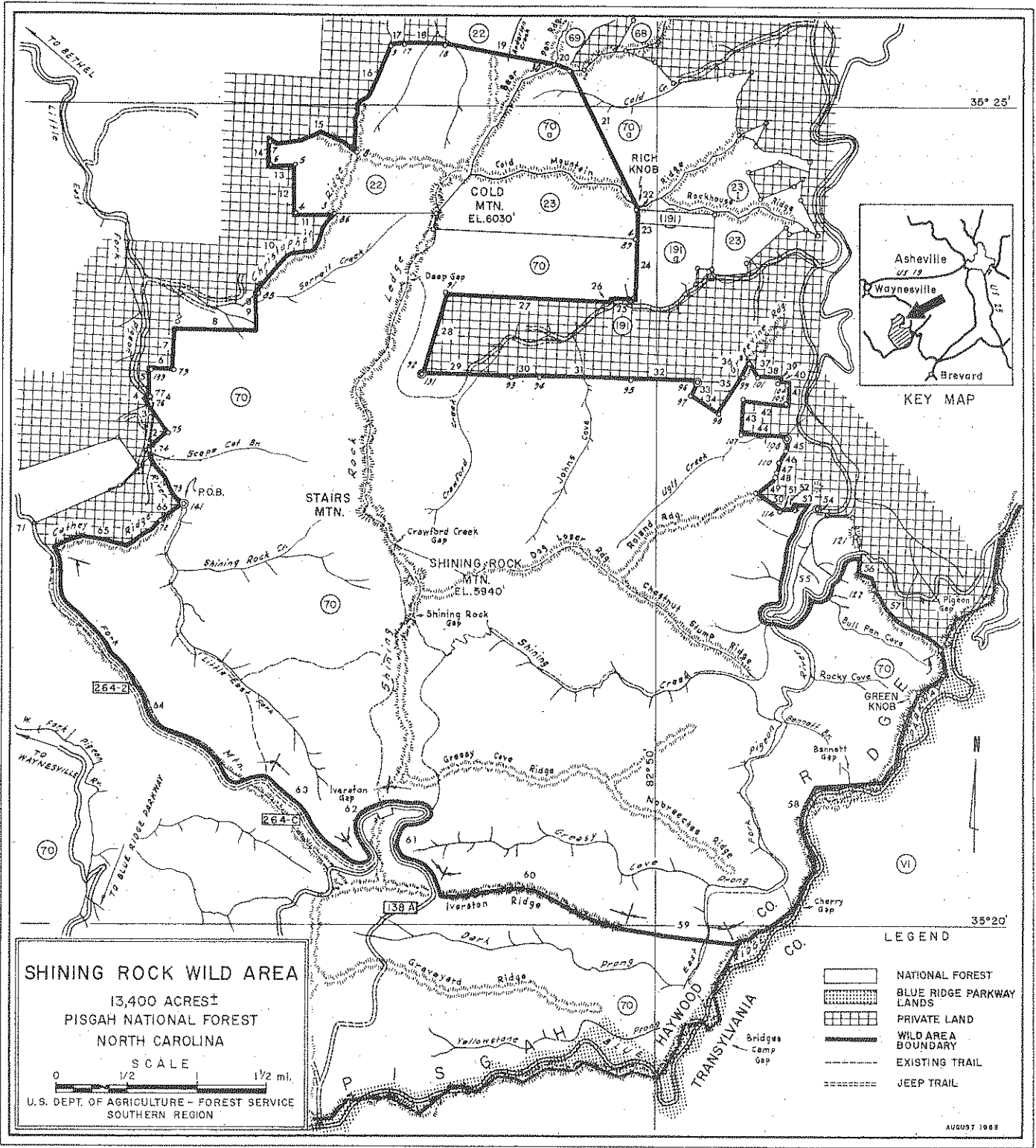
The proposed Wild Area has long been recognized for its unique vegetative cover, constituting the southernmost projection of the Canadian Zone. Severe burns several decades ago account for the unusual variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Timber growth is sparse at the higher elevations except for moist sites where some southern fir trees have survived. Herbaceous vegetation now covers most of what was believed to have been bare areas.

Some examples of the herbaceous plants, shrubs, and wild flowers are: five species of rhododendron, two mountain laurels, five St. John's-wort, ninebark, two species of service-berry, trillium, mountain-ash, witch-hazel, phlox, orchids, cranberries, fire-pinks, asters, gentians, ferns, and mosses. Shrubs and herbaceous plants form the dominant vegetative cover on approximately 5,000 acres. Commercial collecting of plants would not be permitted.

There are many tree species including ash, basswood, birch, black gum, chestnut, cucumber, black oak, chestnut oak, northern red oak, scarlet oak, white oak, hemlock, hickory, red maple, yellow poplar, buckeye, black cherry, black locust, silverbell, black walnut, beech, butternut, and others. There are many trees which are large for the particular species and have exceptional scenic qualities. Naturalists and other recreationists will find various plant communities, unusual combinations and contrasts.

There is timber of commercial value on approximately 5,000 acres. Here the average tree is about 18 inches in diameter breast high and of fair quality. The stands range from less than 2,000 to more than 4,000 board feet per acre, with an average of 3,000 board feet per acre. The estimated total volume of commercial timber is 15,730 MBF. An annual cut of about 500 MBF would be foregone by placing the area under wilderness management. This amounts to less than one half of 1 percent of the planned allowable cut from the Pisgah Working Circle in which the proposed wild area is located.

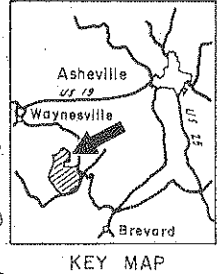
There are approximately 3,400 acres of inoperable stands which, because of poor composition and difficult accessibility, would not be considered operable in the foreseeable future.



SHINING ROCK WILD AREA
 13,400 ACRES±
 PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST
 NORTH CAROLINA

SCALE
 0 1/2 1 1/2 mi.

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE - FOREST SERVICE
 SOUTHERN REGION



- LEGEND**
- [Stippled pattern] NATIONAL FOREST
 - [Cross-hatched pattern] BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY LANDS
 - [Grid pattern] PRIVATE LAND
 - [Thick solid line] WILD AREA BOUNDARY
 - [Dashed line] EXISTING TRAIL
 - [Dotted line] JEEP TRAIL

AUGUST 1963

The area is frequently used for wilderness-type recreation by individuals and groups including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, various hiking clubs, botanists, geologists, and others seeking this type of outdoor recreation. Much of the area is accessible by trails which are the only improvements.

Under the proposed wilderness type of management, new and existing trails would be adequately shaped, drained, and grassed to prevent erosion and otherwise maintained in serviceable condition. They would be used only for horseback or foot travel and to provide emergency access to suppress fires. As funds permit, additional horse and foot trails would be built for hiking and riding to special features and other points of interest. However, sizeable areas would be left without trails.

There are numerous springs throughout the area. Those that are adjacent to hiking trails would be developed to the extent necessary to prevent pollution.

No other improvements would be built or permitted inside the area except such simple camping facilities normally provided for wilderness-type use.

A wildlife protector's dwelling is located near the boundary at the intersection of Dry Branch and the Big East Fork of Pigeon River. The 10-acre lot on which the dwelling is located has been excluded from the proposed boundary. There are no other structures along the boundary or inside the area.

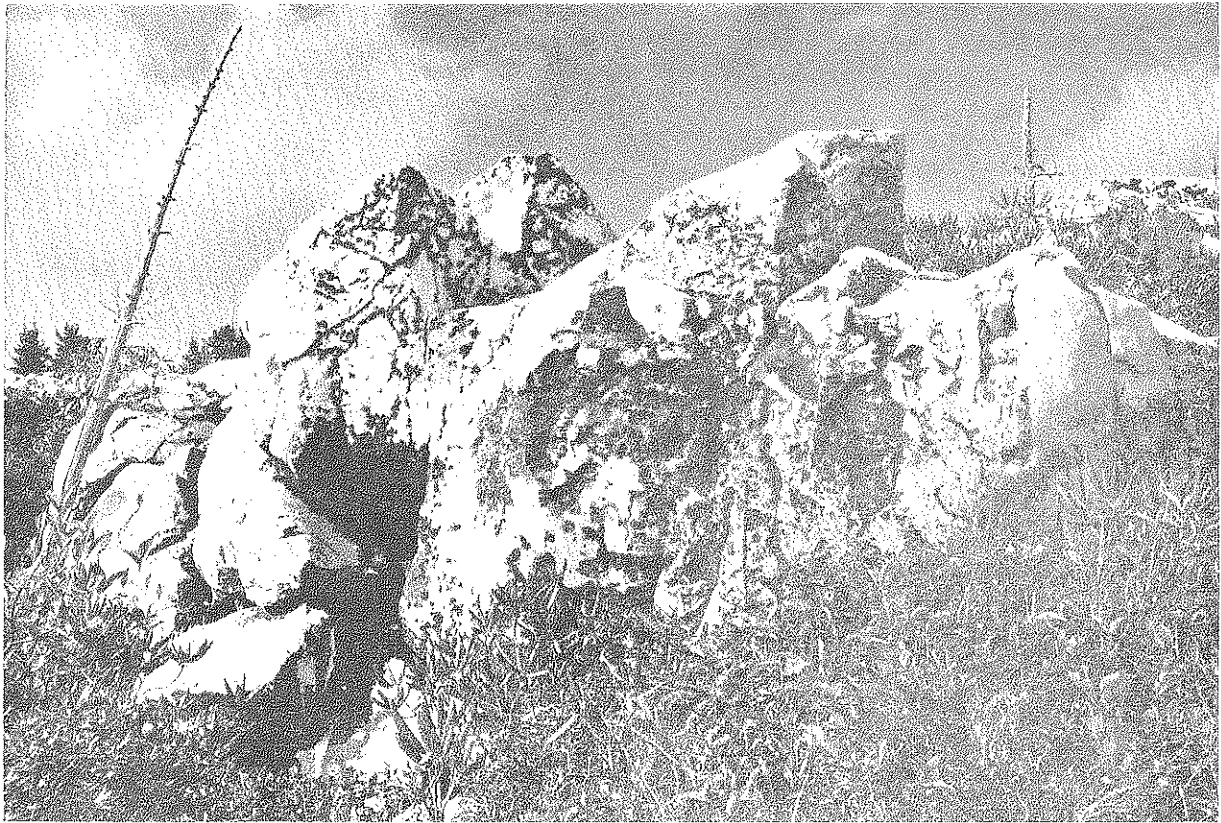
There is no commercial grazing within the area at present. Because of steep slopes and hardwood timber species, livestock grazing would seriously conflict with the objectives of watershed and wildlife management. Therefore, no commercial grazing is planned in the future.

In determining the best and most logical boundaries for the Wild Area, it was necessary to include a portion of the drainage of Ugly Creek covered by a timber sale contract which expires December 20, 1963. About 500 MBF are left to be cut and the operation will be completed this year. The skid trails and log landings will be revegetated and otherwise treated as necessary to hasten natural recovery and prevent vehicular access. Managed as a wild area there would be no trees cut except as an emergency measure to stop the spread of wildfire, insects, and diseases.

For a number of years, the military forces have used helispots located within the area for training their pilots under extreme variations of elevation and wind. This is a good area for this type of training - one of the best east of the Mississippi and continued use by the military would be permitted provided such use was essential and with the assurance that such use would not seriously conflict with the proposed use of the area. Some helispots would also be needed for fire control.

All commercial uses would be excluded. There are no power withdrawals, impoundments, or proposed impoundments within the area. There are, likewise, no outstanding special-use nor mining nor prospecting permits. Since mineral development in this proposed wild area would be contrary to the purposes for which it is to be classified, the Forest Service would not approve any applications to lease minerals within the established area.

Generally, all areas which qualify as wilderness contain some resources, such as timber, which cannot be fully used in harmony with wilderness. However, the proposed area has high wilderness values in comparison with its known commodity values, and it is therefore considered predominately valuable for wilderness and necessary for this purpose both nationally and locally.



The Forest Service will welcome your opinions and suggestions regarding this proposal. A public hearing on the proposal will be held if there is a reasonable demand for such a hearing.

Further specific information may be obtained from:

Forest Supervisor, North Carolina National Forests
P. O. Box 731
Asheville, North Carolina

