

## SUMMARY

### Grassy Ridge Road Construction in the Highlands of Roan

#### The problem

The owners of a 200-acre tract in the Highlands of Roan have started development by bulldozing one road to the 6,189-ft. summit of Grassy Ridge and a second road parallel to adjoining NC Highway 261. It is at the very heart of the foremost scenic mountain area in eastern North America. National forest land borders on three of the property's five sides. For at least eight years the U. S. Forest Service attempted to acquire the tract on a willing seller basis; the owners wanted 7 times the going price for comparable land.

#### What needs to be done

The U. S. Forest Service needs to use existing authorities to take immediate, definitive action to halt development and acquire the 200-acre tract.

#### Why the 200 acres need to be in the public domain

- It is an integral part of one of the most scenic areas in the East, highly visible from the scenic drive from Roan High Knob. In 1839, famed botanist Elisha Mitchell proclaimed, "It is the most beautiful of all our high mountains..." Prior to the recent road intrusion, it had never been altered by the hand of man.

- It is a vital part of the Appalachian Trail environment, being visible from the Trail for two miles. Because the Trail follows open balds, the entire 200 acres is within the Trail's foreground zone in all seasons. The Optimal Location Review for the Trail recommended this acquisition.

- Adjoining Forest Service lands have been designated part of the "Roan Mountain Zone" in the Pisgah National Forest draft plan, unsuitable for the production of timber, to be reserved for public enjoyment as a natural area.

- A study done by the Department of Interior recommended this tract be included as part of a Roan Mountain National Natural Landmark.

- Grassy Ridge has for years been a common destination of hikers and many others who wish to walk a short distance to see and photograph the uncommon beauty.

- The 200 acres contain several rare plant species, including at least two candidates for the Federally endangered list, Grays lily and spreading avens.

- It is an excellent habitat for the Federally-endangered Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus, a subspecies of the northern flying squirrel.

- The recent road construction is devastating to the fragile ecology and a scenic catastrophe. The present owners have demonstrated no sensitivity to the need for protection and have been willing to sell lots for development.

Ask your legislators to write Sec. Lyng and their colleagues on your behalf and to speak in favor of acquisition of the whole tract. They should contact Congressman de la Garza, Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, or Senator Jesse A. Helms, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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