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SHINING ROCK TRACT

New Wilderness Area Established

By JOHN PARRIS
Citizen Staff Writer

Shining Rock, a mile-high outcropping of milky white quartz, and some 13,400 surrounding acres in Pisgah National Forest became part of the far-flung national forest wilderness system Wednesday.

The official classification of the Shining Rock tract as a wild area was authorized by Chief of the U. S. Forest Service Edward P. Cliff.

Plans for establishing the new wild area had been under way for several years.

Shining Rock is the third wild area to be set aside east of the Mississippi. The other two are the 7,655-acre Linville Gorge Wild Area, also in Pisgah National Forest, and the 5,400-acre Great Gulf Wild Area on Mount Washington in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest.

Including Shining Rock, there are 33 wild areas in the national forest wilderness system.

Located on headwaters of Pigeon River, the Shining Rock Wild Area is 20 miles southwest of Asheville and 16 miles south of Waynesville.

The area abounds in scenic waterfalls, flowering shrubs and trees, trout streams, bear and deer, and opportunities for back-country hiking and camping.

Peter J. Hanlon, Supervisor of N. C. National Forests, told The Citizen that the new wild area would be managed to protect and preserve its wilderness character.

"No access roads will be built," he said. "They will be

by trails. Only simple campgrounds and sanitary improvements will be installed.

"No trees will be cut except as an emergency measure to stop the spread of wild fire, insects, and diseases. All commercial uses will be excluded.

"However," Hanlon added, "hunting and fishing will be allowed, but no motorized vehicles will be permitted."

He pointed out that the area has not been heavily hunted in

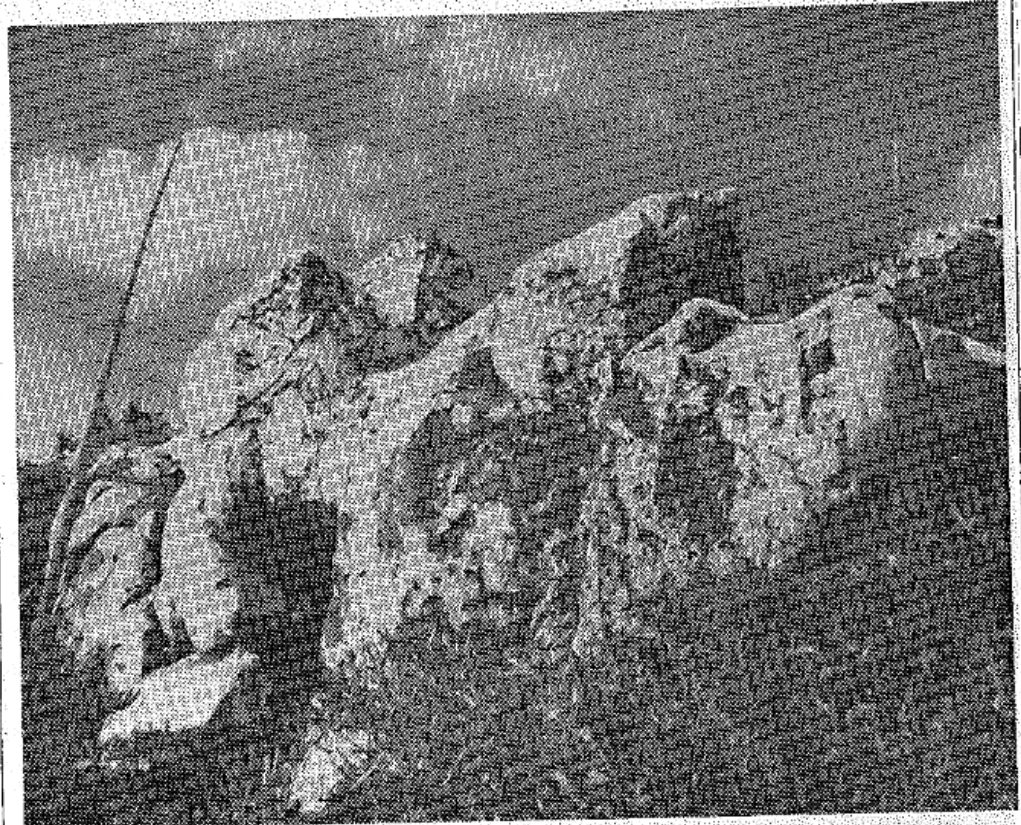
the past, and, "as a wilderness-type area, with only horseback and foot access, the bear and deer and other game species should become increasingly plentiful."

One of the champions of the new wild area is U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who spent several days hiking over the Shining Rock area two years ago. He described it as one of the unique areas in all the land.

Ferns grow five and six feet tall, and there's a rare wild cranberry bog in the area.

Thousands of huckleberry bushes cover the mountainsides.

For a number of years, the military forces have used heli-spots located within the area for training their pilots under extreme variations of elevation and wind. They will be allowed to continue.



SHINING ROCK'S summit beams in the sun. (U. S. Forest Service Photo)

