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## Blue Ridge Field Trip Notes

### Blue Ridge Ecoregion: 66

We saw perhaps hundreds of new subdivisions in the Blue Ridge but no gated communities. We did not west of the New River. Did not go into Grayson or Wythe Counties in the block, though later we did enter Grayson County south of the block. Blue Ridge Parkway between Patrick and Carroll counties and in Carroll County, VA. cabbages. Houses very close to the Parkway in places. Roads close to a paralleling the Parkway in places. We saw several new, good looking schools in the region. The Piedmont and Blue Ridge did not have the new construction that was a them in the Southeast Plains

### *Patrick County, VA*

### *Carroll County, VA*

### ***Block 66-21—Carroll, Grayson, and Wythe Counties Virginia. Delorme p. 24***

Interstate 77 passes through the northeast corner of this block. Interstate 81 passes only about seven miles to the north.

Wythe County W of I-77. Dying trees. Hardwoods. Nursery pines. No trespass signs and gravel pit. Tree plantation.

Carroll County.

Jefferson National Forest. Gravel road. Houses ended at the boundary of the National Forest. On the National Forest. Lots of dumping and roadside trash. power lines. Cover of trees. Use unclear because we saw no sign of cutting. At the top of the ridge we found signs of one or more inholdings with gates and maintained fences and abandoned barns. There was a possible driveway to a house.

New River area still on gravel road. Rhododendron undercover. Mobile house.

Good newer houses began in number at the where the hard surfaced road began.

Pasture and corn. Log truck along the road.

From Hebron to Galax was a solid string of house on the ridge line.

Near Galax signs of hobby farms and either pine plantations for Christmas tree plantations.

Signs of small scale logging operations.

### ***Out of Block***

Galax. Two B.C. Vaughn Furniture plants, one very large.

To Boone on 58/24

Grayson County, VA. Pasture, Christmas trees, corn, logging truck with lumber logs, rocky pasture, corn, more Christmas trees, tobacco.

New River.

Corn, tobacco, more Christmas trees.  
Ashe, County, NC.

Tobacco	Corn	Christmas Trees
6	0	1

Wood Chips  
Jefferson County

Tobacco	Corn	Christmas Trees
1	0	2

Signs of logging, pasture, mobile home.  
Ashe County has North Carolina's only cheese plant.

**Block 66-41, Watauga. Watauga, Avery, and Cadwell Counties.  
Delorme 33 & 13.**

This block is centered on Boone a rapidly growing college town that is a node for new growth. There is one ski resort near Blowing Rock in the block and three just outside of the block near Banner Elk. The Blue Ridge Parkway snakes through the SE section of the block and the Appalachian Trail is located less than ten miles west of block. Pisgah National Forest is scattered through the block. Additionally Grandfather Mountain, an international reserve is located in the center of the block. Moses Cone Memorial Park is located adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway near Blowing Rock. This park is one of the large public reserved lands along the Parkway. Blowing Rock is an exclusive community with upscale shops, houses and condos. It is also growing very fast. Watauga County has no zoning, but recent development has upset many. During the summer of 2000 the county commission has held a series of zoning meeting. Rural Watauga County agriculture includes elk farms, bees, herbs, apples, alpaca, organic farms and llamas.

A major highway upgrade on 421 is making Boone more easily accessible. Boone's east end is Christmas trees and new buildings on hills. A mall is expanding. Traffic was heavy. Appalachian State is expanding. We saw a new building nearing completion. Highway 105 SW of Boone was valley sprawl. The University Courtyard is new this year. These are university owned apartments that will be rented to students rather than build new residence halls in the crowded part of campus.

Vulcan mine. Log home sales, roadside produce.  
Willow Creek Golf. Condos (some on time share)  
Tobacco. Older houses and barns. Houses 10-15 years old. Gallery. Hound Ears club.  
Mountain side and mountain top houses.

Christmas trees. Signs of tourism. Lindal Cedar homes. Hawks Nest ski sign. Christmas store. Mine for tourists. Tree farm and nursery. Strip shops with view of Grandfather Mountain. Ski rentals, antiques, lodge, Tatum Galleries, racquet center, used books, barbecue.  
Intersection of 105 & 184 (road to Banner Elk) strip development with nice shops with galleries, antiques, etc, ski slope signs.

Avery Co. Blowing Rock. Grandfather Mountain.

Tobacco	Corn	hay
15	2	1

Madison County. Air cured tobacco.

**Block 66-59. Asheville, NC in Buncombe County. Delorme 31 & 53. 8-17-00**

This block is at the north edge of Asheville and includes the northern part of the city. The Blue Ridge Parkway slices through the southeast corner of the block. Highway is a four lane north-south road that connects settlements in the block to Asheville. Asheville lies in the Asheville basin along the French Broad River. This is a setting renowned for its pleasant climate and beautiful sights since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Biltmore Mansion, constructed by George Vanderbilt is a major tourist attraction. Asheville is also the eastern gateway to Great Smokey Mountain National Park.

Interstates 40 and 26 intersect in Asheville.

The population of Asheville increased from 279,000 in 1994 to 297,000 in 1999. Growth slowed in Asheville in the 1990s compared with the 1980s, but increased in the surrounding area.

<http://www.ashevillechamber.org/Population.pdf> . The median age of Boncome county is higher than both the national average and the North Carolina average. This area has become a retirement mecca. For additional information: <http://www.ashevillechamber.org/economics.htm>

Photos etc.: <http://www.ashevillechamber.org/ashevillecvb.htm>

Foggy morning limited visibility to near locations.

Highway 19/23. New 4-lane road. . Big mobile home park. New strip development. New shopping center. Hillside houses. Urban Beaver Lake that has generated higher value housing. Residents are having it dredged to maintain its quality and their property values. Old highway strip along the N side of the lake. The buildings were old but occupied (the locations have maintained their value, perhaps because of proximity to the lake.

North of town. Small scale logging. Quality Assured Label printing business.

Reems Creek Rd. NE. Rockwell Automation, older houses, golf, Balcrank business, houses, older houses, Karpon Steel.

Ridgeway private 1970s subdivision with nice but not great houses. Subdivisions are a way to achieve control over land use in areas that do not have zoning. The Creek Road was a perfect example of an unzoned landscape with businesses next to houses, mobile houses and shacks next to nice houses with horses.

Tobacco, golf course, new house being built, mobile houses, horses, hay, tobacco, pasture, At Ox Creek (Zebulon B. Vance birthplace <http://www.weaverville.com/vance/> ) there was an upgrade in land use intensity. new building,.

Hawks Landing new subdivision: 4 houses, 2 sold lots, 2 lots for sale. Steep roads up a side valley. See their brochure for more information.

Upper valley: tobacco, older houses, mobile houses. New house at the top.

Down the north side.

Pavement, old mobile house, older houses a the top, new modular house, new subdivision near the top. Painted Fork housing—older. Countryside Estate: new subdivision.

Valley opens up to pasture, and tobacco. Perhaps outside of Asheville influence.

Barnardsville: intersection of four creeks, four valleys, and four roads. Tobacco. Ohio Electric Motors.

West on 197. corn, tobacco. Horseshoe Ridge houses, mobile home park, cattle, clearing of forest (harvesting?),

West of 19/23. Mobile home park at the intersection with 197. Twin Brook Hills (see Brochure), strip of houses up and down the road. Pasture was the land use in larger parcels

behind the strip houses. Kimberly Hills off New Stock Rd. with modular houses visible but not in the subdivision.

Kudzu.

Martin Ford Rd. Not much happening.

Back to Asheville and up Beaver Dam Rd. More or less continuous housing up the valleys. The main valley has older houses while the side, smaller valleys have dead-end roads and newer houses. Beaver Dam Rd. becomes gravel near the top as the road approaches the Blue Ridge Parkway. There was a high concentration of new houses in this area. The lots appeared to be small. Some houses were right beside the road and frequently on the downhill side so that passersby could look at the roof and into the yard and windows.

From Blue Ridge Parkway view to valley houses and new hillside houses.

Folk Arts Center on the Parkway. Tourism as a Driving Force.

### ***Block 66-70 East of Asheville. Buncombe, McDowell, Rutherford, and Henderson Counties. DeLorme 53 & 54***

See Asheville description. Major activity in this block is centered on Hickory Creek, Lake Lure, and nearby Hickory Nut Gorge and Falls, and Chimney Rock. This is a major tourist valley with a string of tourism dependent settlement strung along the valley floor. The west edge of the block is about three miles east of Asheville and Interstate 40 crosses the northwestern corner. Exit I-40 on exit 64. New prosperous businesses at the exit.

Cheshire Mountain Village (see brochure). A new subdivision that has new houses designed by architects. This is a planned unit residential development with permanent homes, summer and weekend houses (some 'tree houses'), and condos. It had a permanent 600 square foot sales office near the entrance. I suspect that they do some significant advertising in regional media. The visitors lot for sales would be large enough for several cars.

As we drove up the mountain there one and two houses were scattered along the road.

Winding Ridge Road topped at 3,000 feet. At the top was a row of mailboxes (see slide).

Highway 9 in the Broad River valley is old highway US 64. Houses in the woods. Farms along the Broad River. Development along this valley (block side opposite side of block and side of the mountain away from I-40), but with easy access to Asheville had smaller, more informal houses. There were also fewer houses.

Kudzu.

Rutherford County along Rocky Broad River to Lure Lake. Tourist strip. Chimney Rock seemed to be the most popular attraction. New "The Cajun Pig" barbecue was under construction and advertised a Memorial Day 2001 opening. Few jobs outside of tourism.

Corn for silage, dairy cattle, abandoned silos, abandoned chicken houses, old farms. Fletchers Fairview, Inc. Two nice buildings on a hill. Purpose unknown.

### ***Out of Block***

Cadwell County, NC

Burke County, NC

Avery County S. on H. 194. Christmas trees, tobacco (2) hay

19E South in Avery County. Christmas trees, small log pile, log trucks.

Mitchell County, NC. Mine at Spruce Pine

Yancey County, NC

Tobacco, hay, log truck, mill at Burnsville (textile?), new businesses along the highway, expanded grocery store. Avondale mill.

Houses on hills (both nice and mobile), corn and cattle.

Fletcher, NC: ERSI Converyor and Borg Warner for jobs. Owen Manufacturing (large). Corn.

Mountain Home: The Mountain Home Industrial Park had a large plant.

Hendersonville: A large plant. Signs of growth including new and expanding restaurants and new convenience stores. The road Asheville to Hendersonville is becoming a corridor of continuous development. Coat factory. Nursery and greenhouse.

### **66-89 Henderson, Transylvania, and Greenville Counties, NC. Delorme 53 and 71.**

This is largely a mountainous block ten driving miles southwest of Hendersonville and Interstate 26. The French Broad River passes through the northwest part of the block and Brevard is just outside the western edge of the block.

Penrose Quarry a large stone quarry that produces a variety of rock products (in terms of size). Very large tree nursery. Custom woodworking. Beef cattle and rural mobile home strip development. Corn. No significant growth along old highway 64. Mobile homes. High tech lab with unknown products.

Thomas Woods development on south side of the river had secluded sites and 1980s construction. This appeared to be a hillside farm before development. One house overlooked what appeared to be an old pasture.

Fox Crossing. Clusters of new houses. Large Fields in the river valley. More new strip houses. No tobacco. Corn.

New houses ended before Everett Road and Cobb Creek intersection as we moved away from 280 and direct connections to Asheville.

Corn and hay. Lots of corn. Tobacco. Houses up the hill at Little river. New development.

Henderson County. Logs on Du Pont. Scattered houses, some large, one had a pool. AGFA Brevard plant. appeared to be very large with nice employee park with lake.

Green house, golf, Sherwood Forest Golf and private community.

Tourist shops on road from Brevard to Sherwood Forest. Large corn field. Near ridge top houses.

### **Out of Block**

Brevard: <http://www.brevardnc.com/>

Brevard local photos: <http://www.brevardnc.com/media/mediatour.htm>

old with many large, old houses.

South of Brevard: fishing and water recreation in the French Broad River headwaters. Mitchell company

Lake Toxaway: Large lake, golf, house sales, country club, restaurant, many more houses for sale, condos and logging. Saw mill

Jackson County: custom log houses, Sapphire Lakes Country Club, Sapphire Lakes (seemed to be new residential)

Sapphire Mountain and Holly Forest. Huge development <http://www.mountain-properties.com/hollyforest.htm> . This development went for several miles and looked like a planned unit development with at least two golf courses.

Major activity at Cashiers Junction with much construction and expansion.

Grocery store expansion, expensive cars in parking lot. The mountains of this area (Highlands and north) had bare patches which add to the beauty and diversity as well as being at the southern, warmer end of the Blue Ridge where summer are still pleasant and winters mild. Whiteside Mountain seems to be an example of a growth area around a mountain with visible rock.

As we dropped back into lower elevations and the Piedmont we drove by cabbages, nurseries, acres of tomatoes, and cabbages (Rabun County, Georgia).