

## Big Schloss Cluster

**Jonnies Knob  
Great North Mountain  
Falls Ridge  
Church Mountain**

Straddling the Virginia/West Virginia state line on the Lee Ranger District is the Big Schloss cluster. There are seven areas totaling around 71,000 acres.

The terrain here features the narrow, linear mountains characteristic of the Ridge & Valley province. More than in other areas of the George Washington National Forest, rocky slopes, outcrops, and crags here are common. Perhaps the best known of these occurrences is found at the summit of Big Schloss (German for “Castle”). At approximately 31,000 acres, Big Schloss is also one of the largest roadless tracts to be found in the eastern National

**Big Schloss  
Long Mountain  
Cove Mountain**

Forests. Elevations range from 1500 to 3300 feet above sea level.

These Mountain Treasures embrace the headwaters for the Potomac and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Hiking trails traversing these Treasures are numerous, as are the opportunities to escape from the sights and sounds of industrialization.

Much of the Big Schloss cluster is within a two hour drive from Washington, D.C. These wildlands have no permanent protection from resource extraction, and unfortunately, logging in these Mountain Treasures, particularly their lower slopes, is common.



Hunting Coons

Photo by Norris Campbell

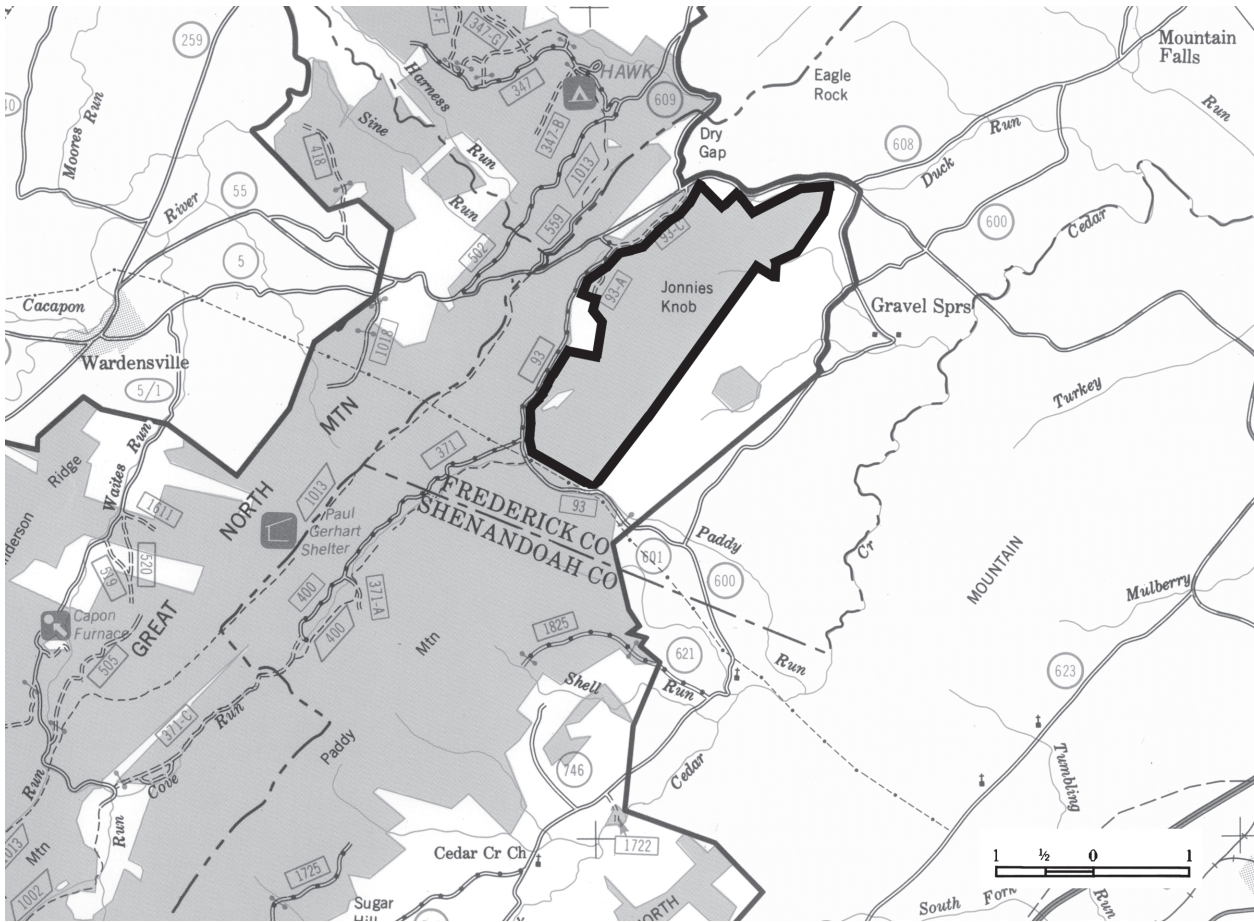
*I was born and raised in Augusta County not too far from Craigsville, Virginia. When I was young my daddy would take me into the woods to hunt. We hunted for deer and bear and coons. He taught me to love and respect the land and the wildlife that we hunted. I carry those lessons with me every time I go into the woods.*

*Lots of folks have asked me why I hunt. It seems like an easy question but the answer is complicated. Mostly I like to hunt to hear my dogs barking. There is something satisfying about listening to my hounds when they pick up a scent and begin the chase. Its good exercise. If you ever run with dogs you realize how big the mountains are. Its a family event and it gives me and my son time together in the woods.*

*My dogs have treed a lot of bears and raccoons. Me and my buddies kill only a few because we know that overhunting depletes the game population. I limit my kill because I want to ensure that there is game for my grandkids children.*

*I feel the same about protecting our mountains because if the game doesn't have a place to live, I can't hunt.*

Norris Campbell--Resides near Craigsville, Virginia  
Retired



## Jonnies Knob

Jonnies Knob is the terminus of Paddy Mountain north of the Paddy Run gap. This area features spectacular cliffs and rock outcroppings at its southern end high over Paddy Run. Elevations range from 1600 to 3000 feet high. The primary topographic features include Dog Cliff and Cove Run.

The area's steep ridges create numerous small intermittent streams on the high side slopes. Only near the bottom of the steep slopes is it possible to see year round flow.

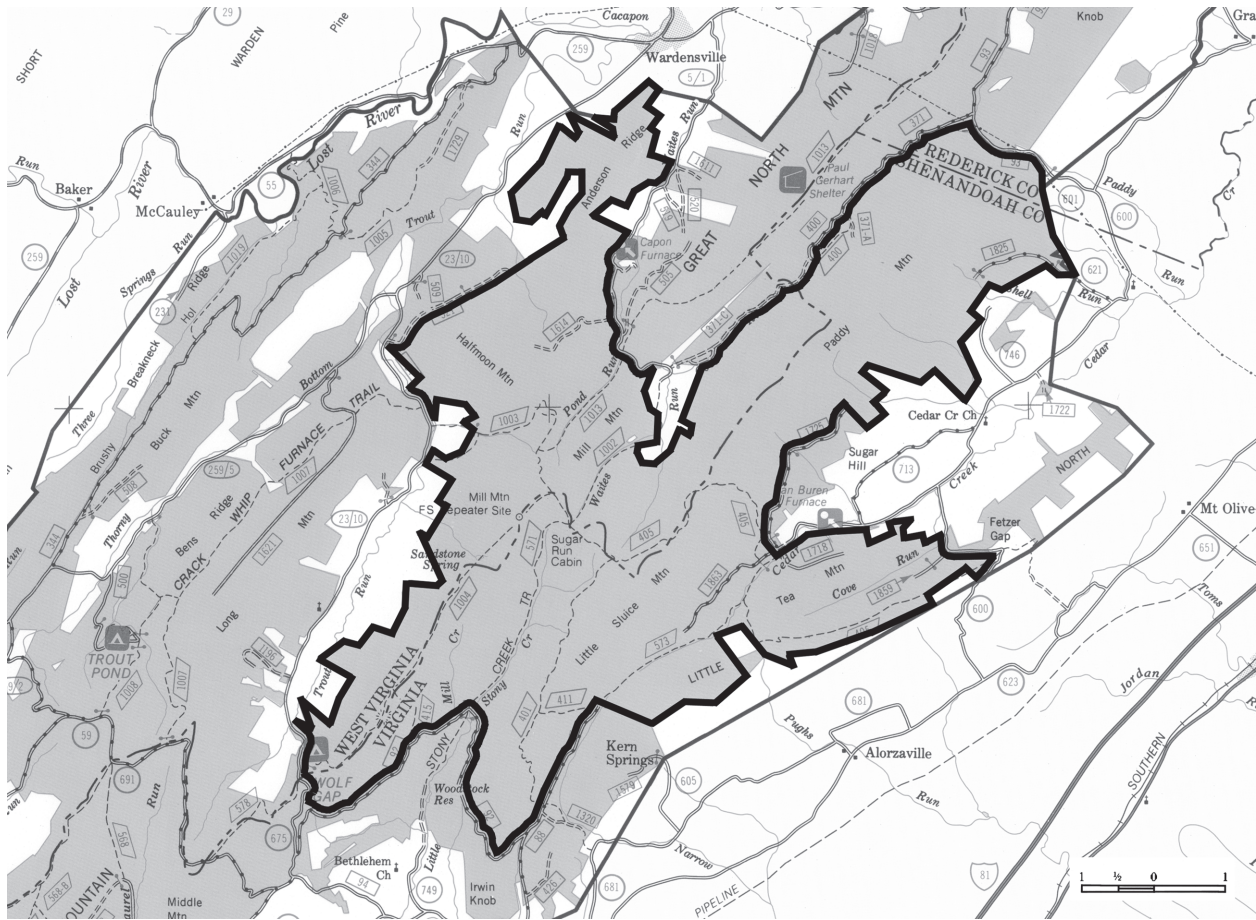
Jonnies Knob includes a significantly sized tract of "semi-primitive non-motorized" lands, a remote type of recreational experience offered by the Forest. Without maintained trails or interior roads, this area provides solitude and seclusion from the sights and sounds of human activities.

Rare species are known to inhabit the area, and it provides refuge for 417 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 2499 acres

**Location:** Frederick County, Virginia in the Lee District

**Topos:** Conicville, Lost City, Orkney Springs, Wolf Gap



## Big Schloss

Big Schloss is one of the largest inventoried roadless areas not only on the George Washington National Forest, but in all of the eastern National Forest. The elevations of this area range from 1600 feet to almost 3300 at the top of Mill Mountain. The ridgetops are capped with sandstone which creates the many rock outcrops the area is noted for. Some of these include Big Schloss, Little Schloss, Halfmoon, and Three High Heads. These rocky knobs are “hacking sites” where endangered Peregrine Falcons were reintroduced to the wild.

The upper reaches of Stony Creek, Paddy Run, and Cove Run have their beginnings in the Big Schloss. These are all tributaries of Cedar Creek and

the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

Approximately 7500 acres of this roadless area lie within the Big Schloss Special Management Area. It is considered unsuitable for timber harvesting and is managed to maintain a natural appearance.

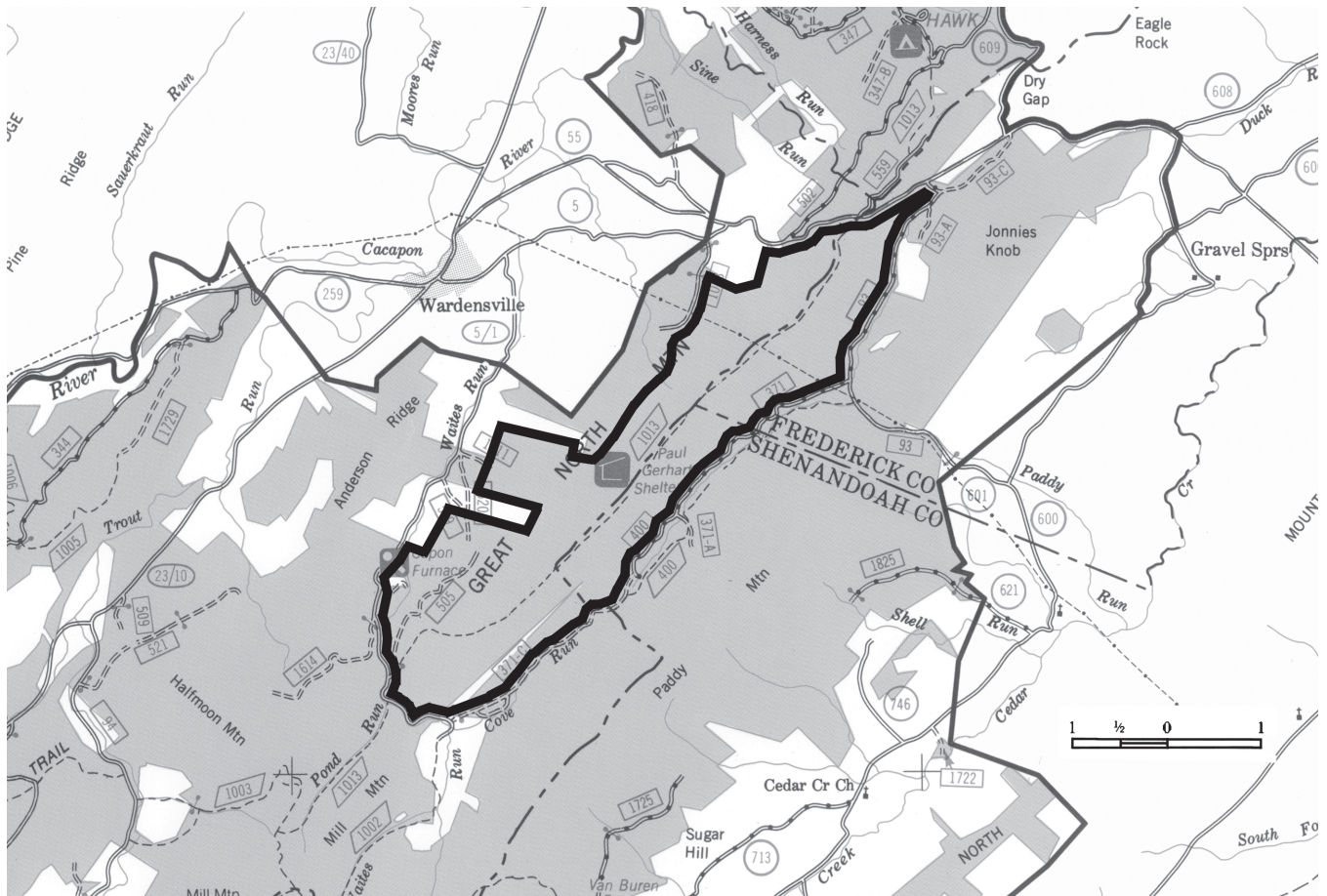
Recreational activities are the highlight of the area. Hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, and mountain biking are the primary recreational activities. In the late fall hunters take to the woods in large numbers, and fishing opportunities are well known in Little Stony Creek, a native trout stream.

There is an 866 acre forest plan Special Biological Area as well as 4825 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 31,204 acres

**Location:** Frederick and Shenandoah Counties, Virginia and Hardy County, West Virginia in the Lee District

**Topos:** Baker, Mountain Falls, Wardsville, Wolf Gap, Woodstock



## Great North Mountain

This large section of Great North Mountain lies astride the state line northeast of Capon Furnace. This roadless tract is adjacent to and contiguous with the “inventoried” Big Schloss Roadless Area. The area meets the requirements for being officially designated a roadless area, but it was not.

The steep slopes of Great North Mountain support the tributaries of Paddy Run, Cove Run, and Slate Rock Run. Elevations here range from 1800 feet to 2700 feet above sea level with mixed oak woodlands predominant. Remote habitat and solitude can be found in the interior of the Great North Mountain area.

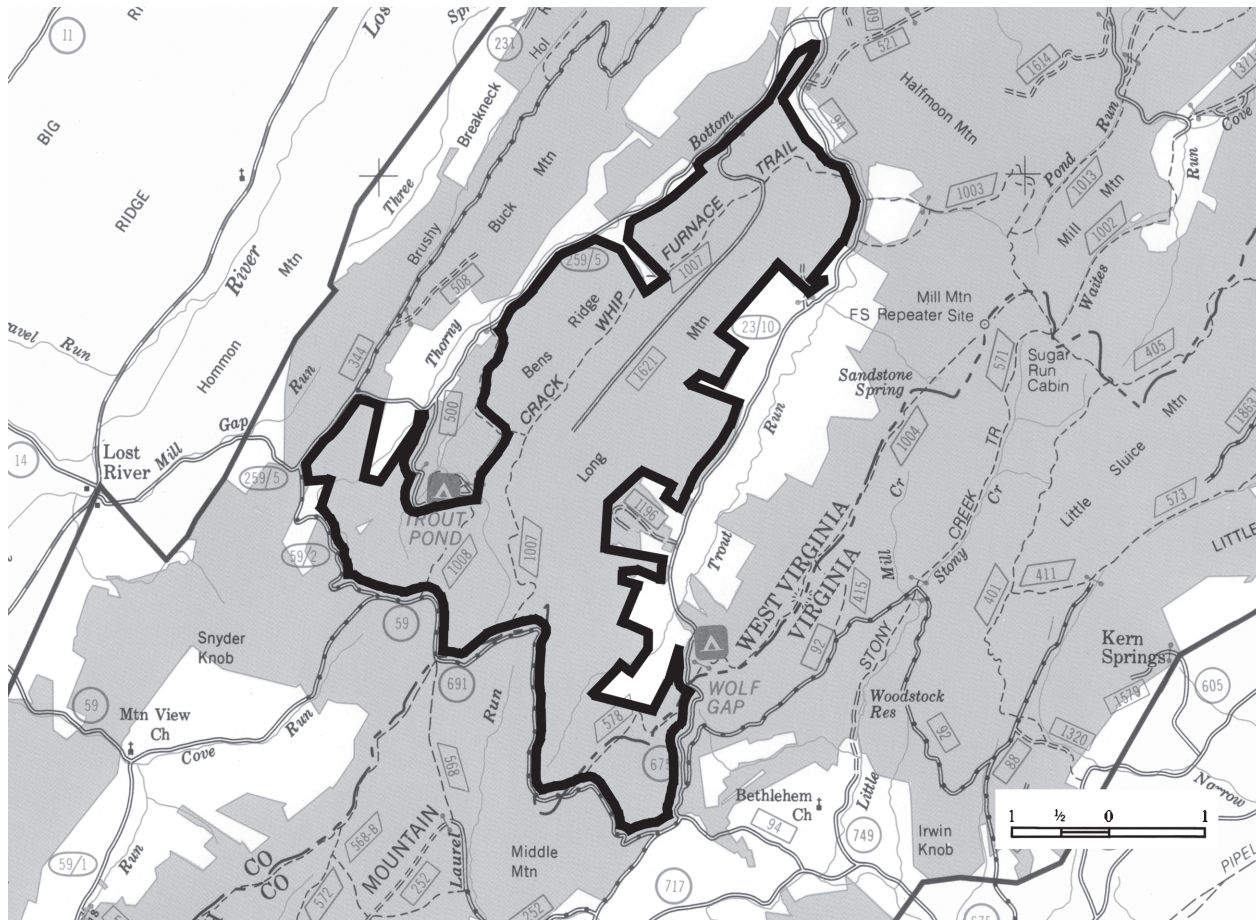
The Tuscarora Trail, running from the Shenandoah National Park to Blue Mountain in Pennsylvania, traverses the stateline/ridgecrest for seven miles, connecting US 55 to FDR 371. The Paul Gerhart Shelter is midway on this trail. The Gerhart Shelter Trail connects the Tuscarora to Paddy Run to the east.

Great North Mountain contains 756 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 6681 acres

**Location:** Frederick and Shenandoah Counties, Virginia and Hardy County, West Virginia in the Lee District

**Topos:** Wardsville



# Long Mountain

Long Mountain is found northeast of the adjacent Trout Pond campground and northwest of the Wolf Gap campground. Long Mountain itself reaches elevations of 3000 feet. Along the upper slopes of its five-mile length, remote habitat and experiences of solitude are available for bears and bushwhackers.

This ridge provides the feeder streams for Trout Pond Run, a tributary of the Cacapon River in the Potomac River watershed.

Long Mountain, another unprotected roadless area of the George Washington National Forest, offers

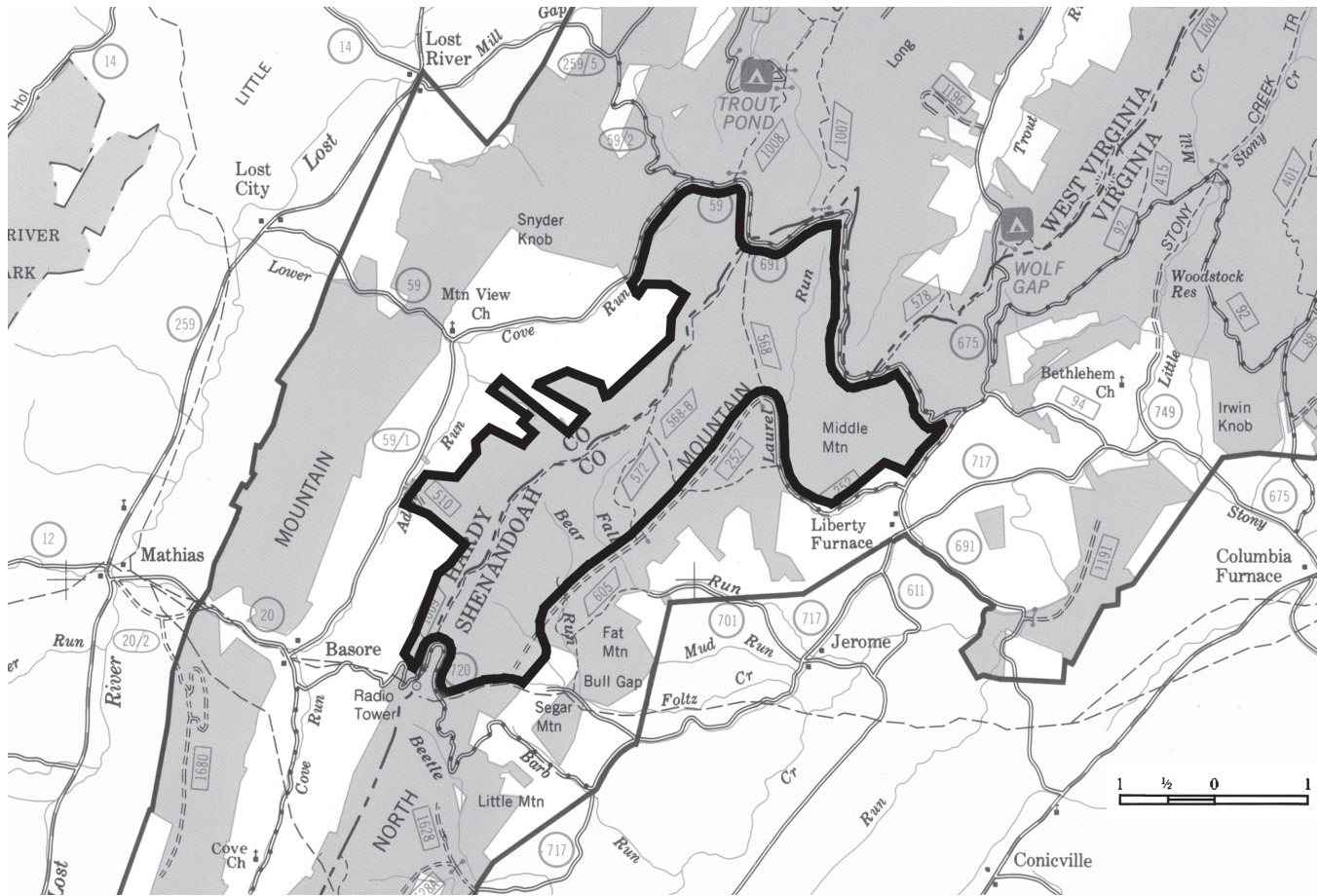
some great hiking trails. Many trails from both campgrounds lead into the area. These include 8.7 miles of the Long Mountain Trail and numerous shorter trails near the Trout Pond Recreation Area. The most unusual is the Chimney Trail which leads to a natural chimney-like rock formation.

Much of the area is considered suitable for timber harvesting. Some stands of old growth occur in the west central part of the area. These stands contain 2184 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 10,508 acres

**Location:** Shenandoah County, Virginia and Hardy County, West Virginia in the Lee District

**Topos:** Wardensville



## Falls Ridge

West of the hamlet of Liberty Furnace, Falls Ridge is one of the larger roadless areas that the Forest Service failed to inventory. Falls Ridge is the dominant geological feature of the area, climbing to over 3000 feet in some locations. The ridge is a part of the Great North Mountain chain. Devils Hole Mountain and Middle Mountain are two named peaks in the area. The Peregrine Falcon has been re-established on these high ridges.

This section of Great North Mountain includes

Bear Run, Laurel Run, Falls Runs, and Foltz Creek, all of which are tributaries of Stony Creek.

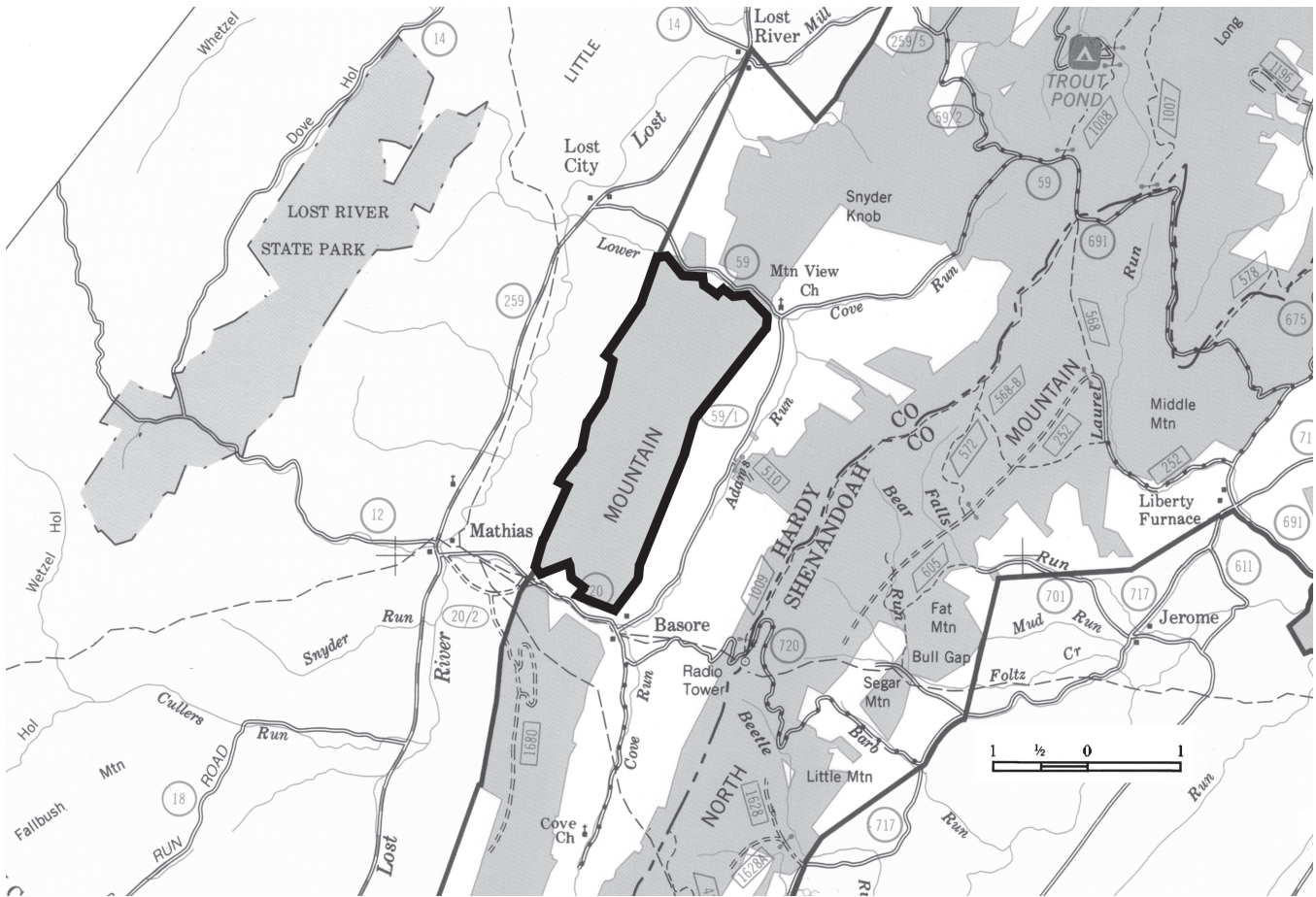
There is a significant trail system on Falls Ridge. The North Mountain Trail runs along the state line/ridge crest for six miles at an elevation of around 3000 feet. The Laurel Run Trail, Stack Rock Trail, and Falls Ridge Trail connect the North Mountain Trail to FDR 252 and Laurel Run to the east.

Falls Ridge contains 1307 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 7738 acres

**Location:** Shenandoah County, Virginia and Hardy County, West Virginia in the Lee District

**Topos:** Conicville, Lost City, Orkney Springs, Wolf Gap



# Cove Mountain

This little gem is located in West Virginia just to the southeast of Lost City. The Cove Mountain Treasure lies on the southern end of the long narrow Cove Mountain but also includes portions of Little Cove Mountain. The elevation ranges from almost 3000 feet at the summit of Cove Mountain to 1650 feet along the Lower Cove Run.

Cove Mountain possesses no major creeks, but many small unnamed feeder streams lie in the Lost River watershed in the Potomac River drainage.

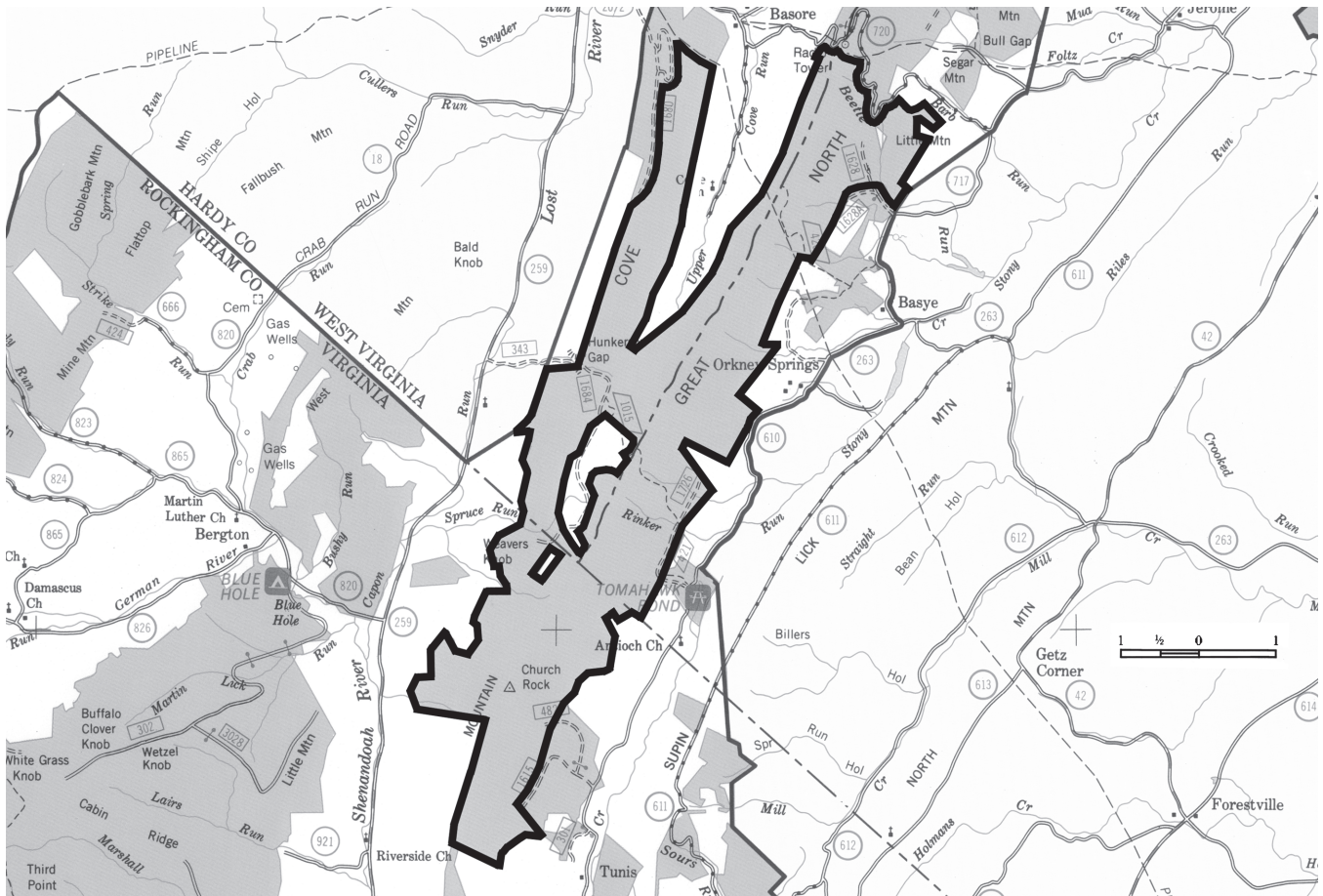
The eastern and western slopes of Cove Mountain are vastly different. The eastern side of the ridge is deeply incised with numerous feeder streams. The western slope of Cove Mountain has five small outliers separated by small creeks

There are no designated trails within the boundaries of the Cove Mountain Treasure. Hunting and bushwhacking are the primary recreational activities.

Cove Mountain contains 720 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 2560 acres  
**Location:** Hardy County, West Virginia in the Lee District  
**Topos:** Lost City, Orkney Springs





# Church Mountain

Situated astride the West Virginia/Virginia state line, Church Mountain is one of the largest uninventoried roadless areas on the Forest. Stretching west of the community of Orkney Springs and north of Fulks Run, this southern portion of Great North Mountain provides the striking eastern backdrop for those traveling on State Route 259. Scree slopes and large rocky crags are scattered across its steep western slopes.

This is a lengthy and generally narrow area. The main ridge crest stretches along at 2800 feet to 3000 feet in elevation for approximately twelve miles. This lengthy ridge comprises the headwaters of numerous watersheds. Church Rock, Weavers Knob, Rinker

Run, Hunkerson Gap, Cove Mountain, and Beetle Run are some of its prominent topographical features.

Church Mountain provides remote habitat for species such as the Black Bear and the Coopers Hawk, as well as opportunities for solitude and serenity. The Orkney Springs Trail traverses the northern portion from Bird Haven on the east to Upper Cove Run in West Virginia, while Hunkerson Gap Trail and Snyder Trail connect FDR 1726 at Tomahawk Pond recreation site on the east to FDR 1684 at Hunkerson Gap in Hardy County on the west.

This area contains 2012 acres of possible old growth.

<p><b>Approximate Size:</b> 12,506 acres</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties, Virginia and Hardy County, West Virginia in the Lee District</p> <p><b>Topos:</b> Wolf Gap, Conicville, Orkney Springs, Lost City</p>
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Male Hooded Warbler

Photo by Bill Duyck

*I grew up watching birds in Virginia, and that early experience led me to a career as a professional biologist. Virginia is a great place to study and watch birds, in part due to its varied regions from the Eastern Shore to the Allegheny Mountains. The same is true on a smaller scale, because most bird species key in very closely to their preferred habitats. Young forests and clearings are home to Chestnut-sided Warblers, while other species, like Scarlet Tanagers, Cerulean Warblers, and Red-eyed Vireos prefer the deep woods, now scarce in Virginia's mountains.*

*My own research has demonstrated the value of relatively undisturbed areas of the National Forest to the breeding of Acadian Flycatchers. I strongly support the protection of roadless areas as a way of protecting some of the last big tracts of forests, and the species of birds that depend on them. Many of Virginia's bird species, especially those that migrate to the tropics, have undergone serious declines in my lifetime. While these species face many threats during migration, they also face serious problems on their breeding grounds in eastern forests. Numerous studies have documented reduced breeding success in forests fragmented by agricultural lands, urban areas, and roads. Chief culprits appear to be an increase in nest predators and nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds. Wilderness legislation offers key protection from these threats by maintaining large areas of unbroken, roadless forests.*

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Editor, The Raven (Journal of the Virginia Society of Ornithology)