



A view from Reddish Knob

Photo by Dan Downy

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## Shenandoah Mountain Complex

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The Shenandoah Mountain Complex is one of the most significant concentrations of wildlands in the Southern Appalachians. In addition to Ramseys Draft, an existing Wilderness area, it holds eight inventoried roadless areas, including Little River roadless area, which is the largest inventoried roadless area in the Southern Appalachians. There are an additional ten uninventoried areas that meet or exceed roadless rule requirements.

The concentration of unroaded and undeveloped lands on approximately 400,000 acres of the George Washington National Forest constitutes a core of native forestland with resources for native species habitat, recreation, hunting, fishing, and clean water.

The most prominent feature of the the area is the mountain massif known as Shenandoah Mountain. This mountain runs sixty miles from the southwest to the northeast within the Northern Ridge and Valley Ecoregion.

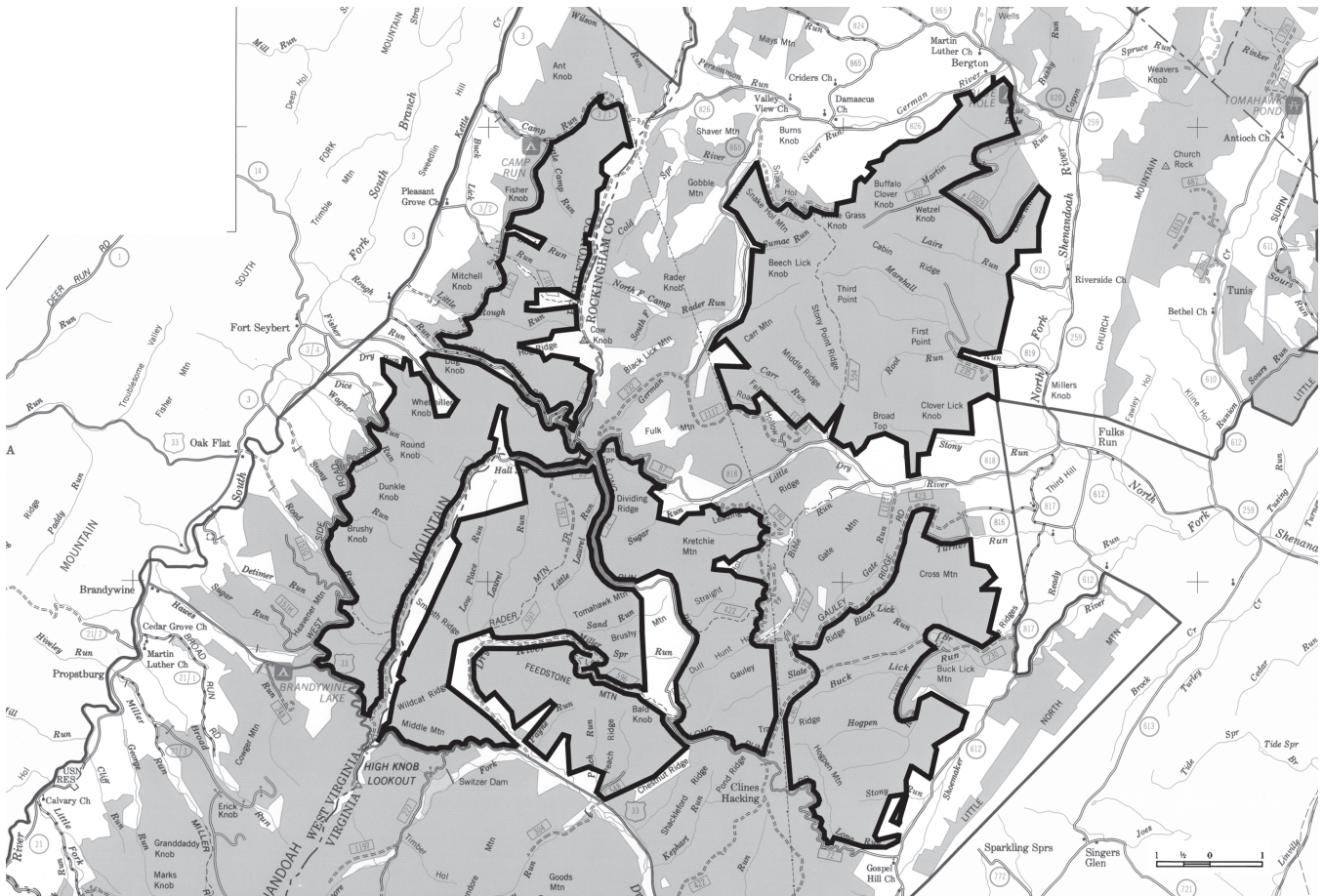
The area contains some of the highest elevations in

the state. Shenandoah Mountain is over 4000 feet for much of its length. Reddish Knob at 4,397 feet gives spectacular views of the Shenandoah Valley to the east and the Allegheny Mountains to the west.

This high concentration of roadless areas and high elevations contributes to the region's significant biodiversity. The area is important for neotropical migratory song birds, Black Bear, and other species that need unfragmented habitat. Numerous rare and sensitive species depend on the Shenandoah Mountain area for critical habitat essential for their survival and their viability.

The relatively undisturbed landscape also provides spectacular scenery, over 170 miles of trails, and excellent hunting and fishing.

Finally, there is probably a greater concentration of old growth on Shenandoah Mountain than on any other portion of the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest.



# Northern Shenandoah Mountain Cluster

**Beech Lick Knob  
Hogpen Mountain  
Feedstone Mountain  
Dunkle Knob**

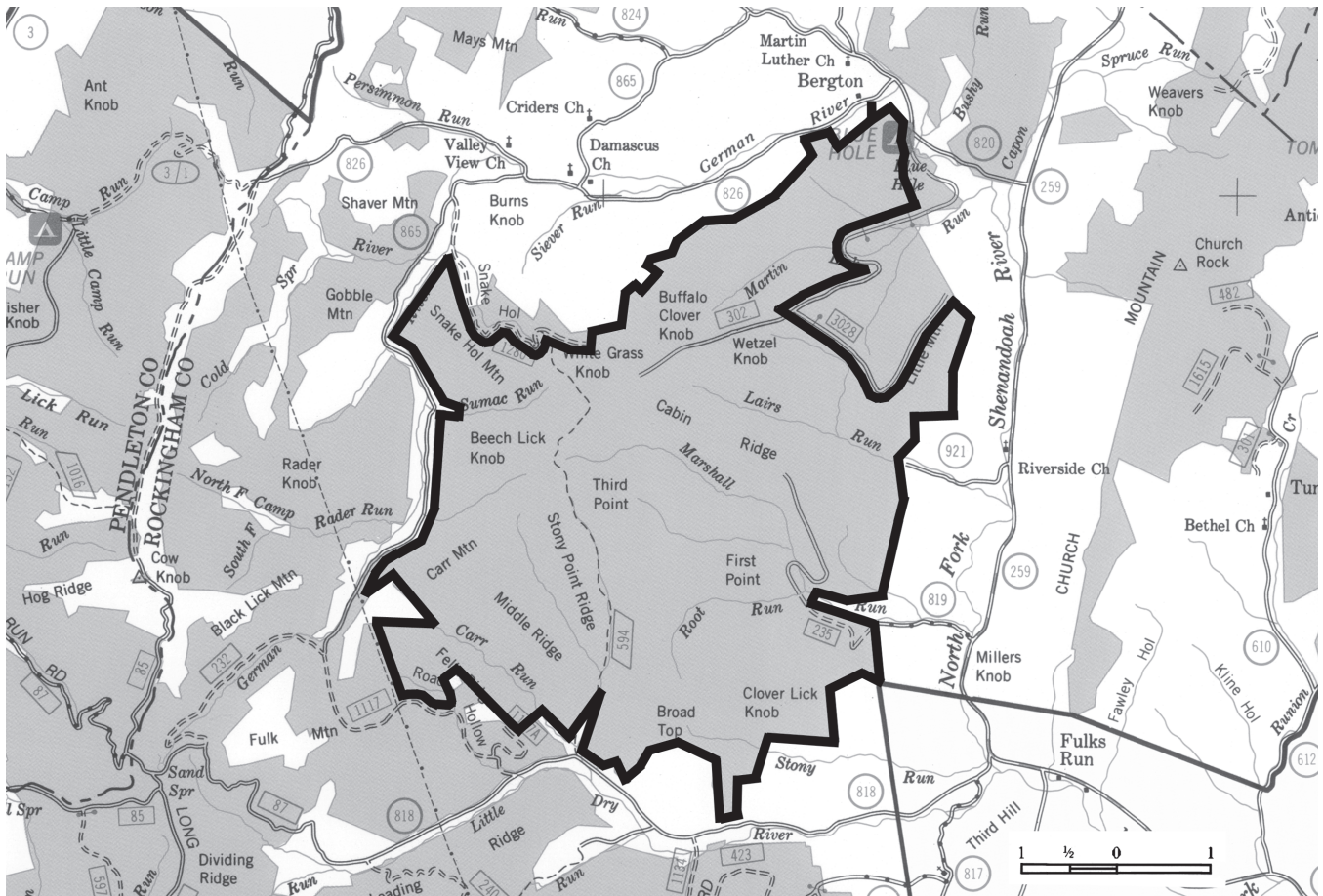
With seven areas of over 58,000 acres the North Shenandoah Mountain Cluster of Mountain Treasures offers some of the most remote settings on the Forest. Far from pavement, the interior of this steep rugged terrain presents beautiful scenic vistas along with the solitude. This section of the North River Ranger District north of US Route 33 occupies both Virginia and West Virginia.

These headwaters of the North Fork of Shenandoah and South Fork South Branch of Potomac Rivers are all part of the Ridge & Valley physiographic province. Elevations here range from 1300 to over 3700 feet. Great biological richness is

**Little Cow Knob  
Kretchie Mountain  
Wildcat Ridge**

present. These Treasures serve as strongholds for rare species and communities, including one of the few occurrences of Red Spruce forest on the GWNF.

The Beech Lick Knob area is one of the largest roadless tracts on the GWNF that the Forest Service failed to include in its official inventory of roadless areas. There are no designated Wilderness Areas in this section of the GWNF. A significant proportion of these lands are considered to be “suitable for timber” by the Forest Service. Logging has occurred in the recent past in some of these Treasures and they are threatened with more in the future.



## Beech Lick Knob

This is one of the largest roadless tracts on the GWNF that the Forest Service failed to include in its official inventory of roadless areas. Elevations here range from 1650 to 3150 feet, with a great diversity of topography. Drainages include Sumac, Liars, Root, Stony, Martin Lick, Marshall, and Carr Runs. Ridges and peaks include Clover Lick, Beech Lick, White Grass, and Wetzel Knobs; Carr, Little, and Snake Hollow Mountains; and First, Middle, and Third Points.

A very large area of “semi-primitive” acreage occurs here where visitors can experience solitude and serenity.

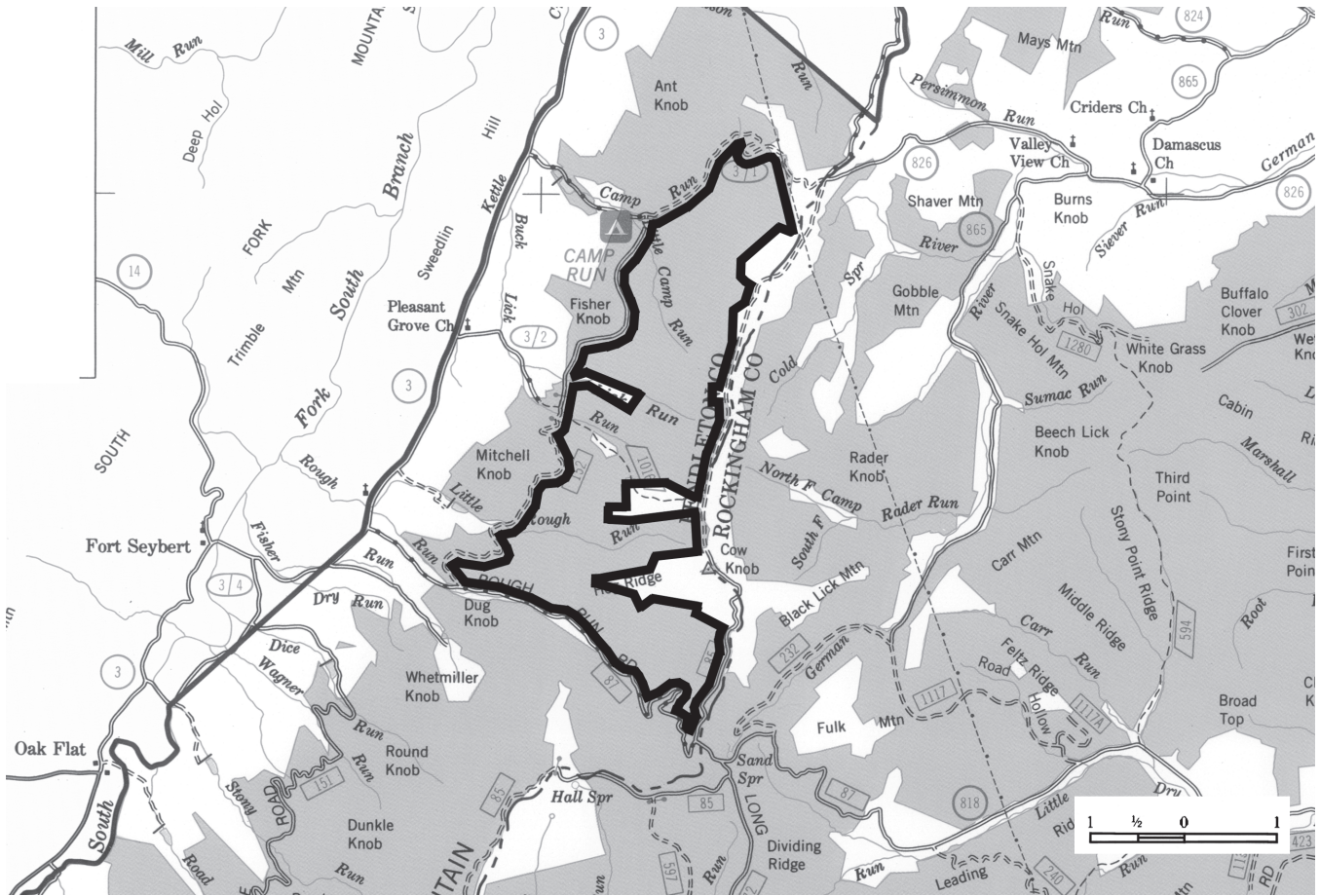
FDR 235A along Root Run is a closed, low-maintenance, grassed-over, little used road that goes into the interior of the area for about 1.5 miles. Blue Hole campground is at the northeastern boundary of the area.

Much of the area is considered suitable for timber harvesting. However, there are 4241 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 17,152 acres

**Location:** Rockingham County, Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Fulks Run, Cow Knob



## Little Cow Knob

Little Cow Knob is located on the western flank of Shenandoah Mountain. This high ridge of Shenandoah Mountain provides the backdrop for the numerous outliers on the west flank.

Little Cow Knob and a portion of Middle Ridge are the only tops that lie within the boundary of this roadless area. Mitchell Knob and Fisher Knob are just outside the boundary. Elevations range from almost 4000 feet near the summit of Shenandoah Mountain to 2000 feet along Camp Run.

These knobs are drained by many small streams. Some include Little Rough Run, Buck Lick Run, Lick

Run, and Camp Run. All these streams are tributaries of South Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River.

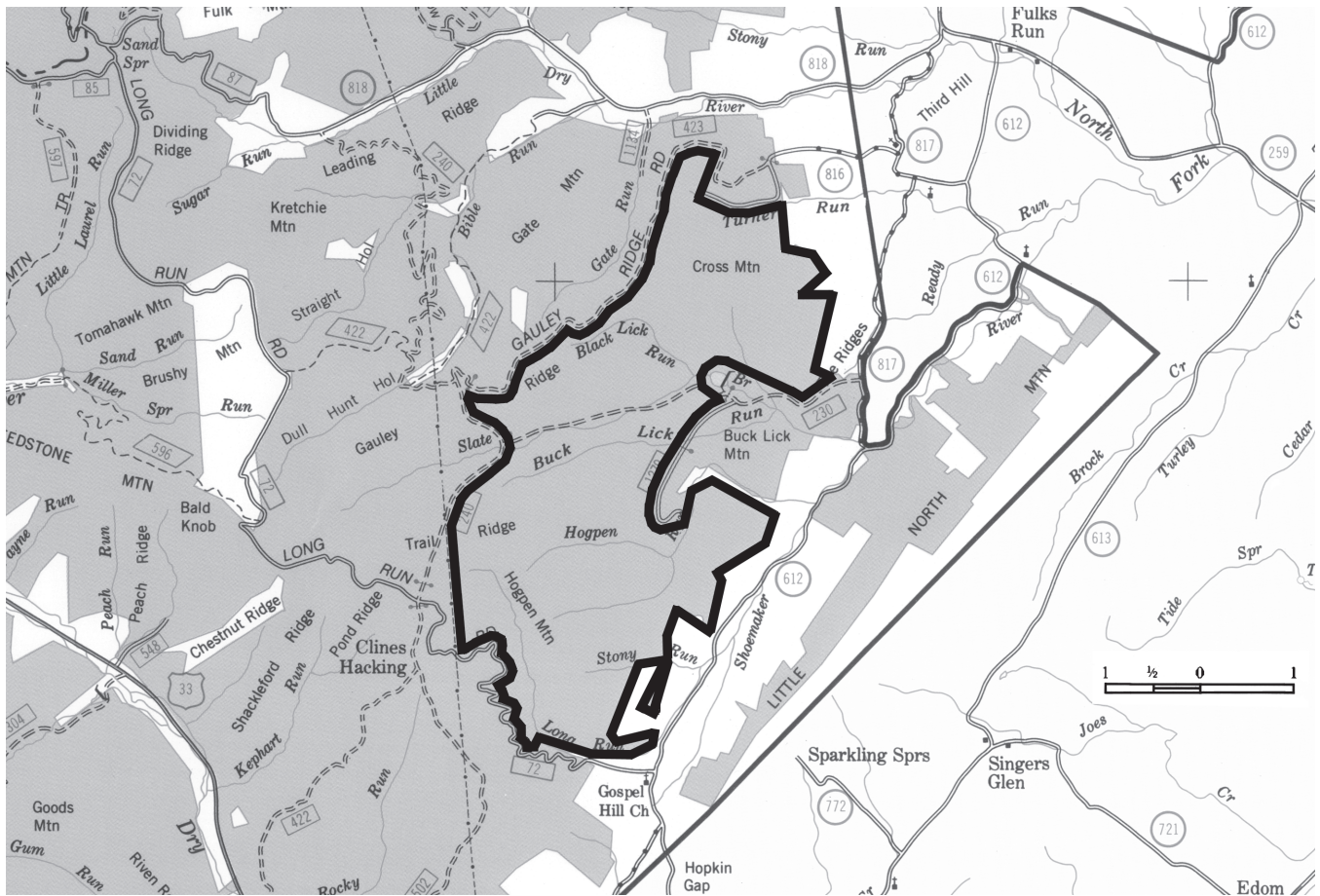
Recreational activities for this area usually begin at the Camp Run Camp Ground. Fishing is popular along Camp Run and Little Camp Run. The camp ground is used by hunters in the fall and early winter.

The area has a 1584 acre forest plan Special Biological Area and contains 2270 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate size:** 5335 acres

**Location:** Pendleton County, West Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Cow Knob, Fort Seybert



## Hogpen Mountain

Hogpen Mountain is located on the flanks of Shenandoah Mountain south of the Beech Lick Knob Mountain Treasure. It is relatively low-lying, with elevations from 1650 to 2700 feet.

A complexity of drainages characterizes the area, including Long, Stony, Buck Lick, Slate Lick, and Hogpen Runs. Long Run is a beautiful stream that provides native trout angling opportunities.

Wildlife that can be observed here include Black Bears and Box Turtles. There is also a designated

“Watchable Wildlife” site around Slate Lick Pond at the northeast boundary of the area.

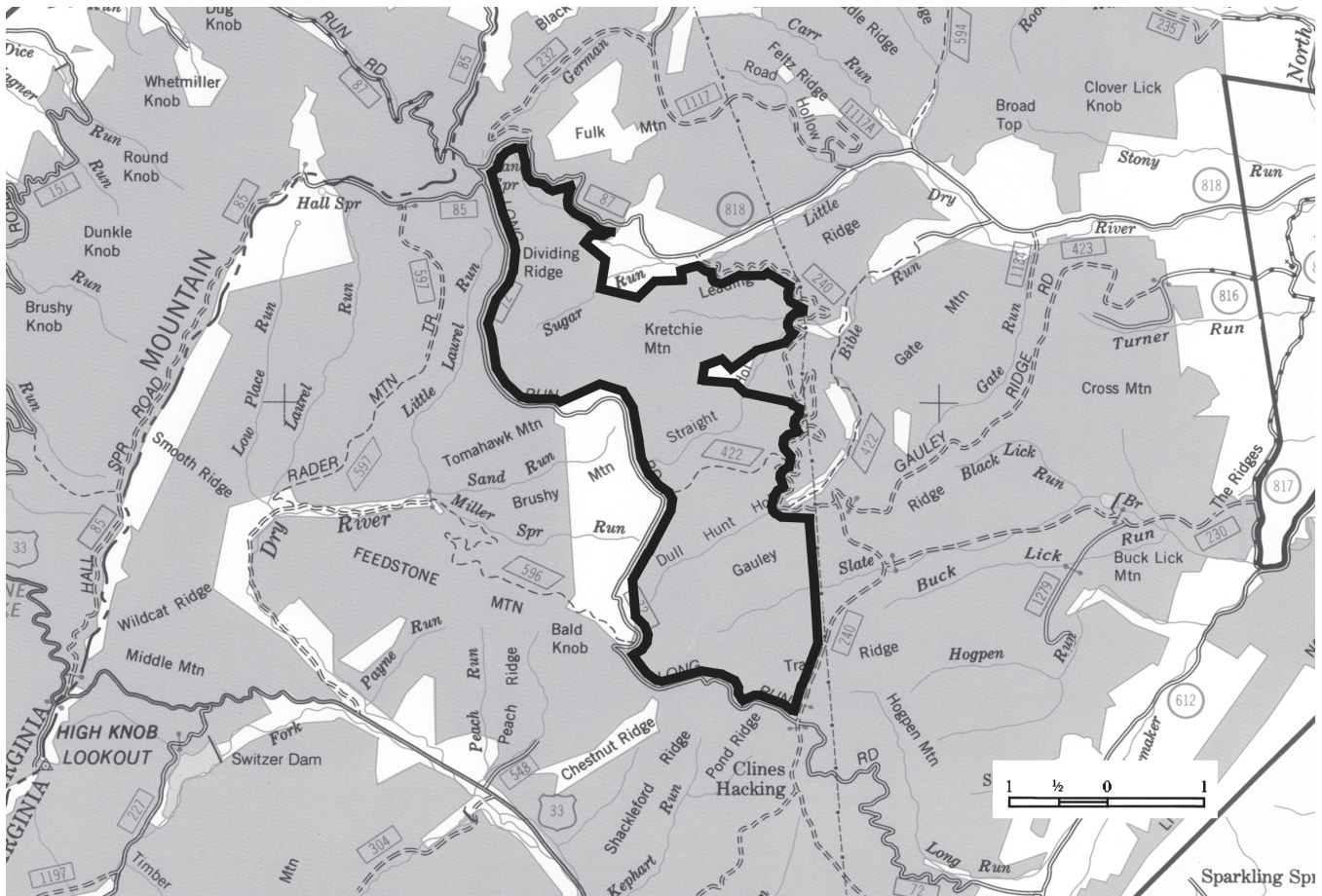
There is a significant amount of “semi-primitive” acreage that provides isolation from the sights of human activities. There are close to eight miles of designated trails in the area with the Ant Hill Trail having a most unusual name.

The area contains 1137 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 9229 acres

**Location:** Rockingham County, Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Singers Glen



## Kretchie Mountain

Kretchie Mountain is an outlier on the eastern flank of Shenandoah Mountain. Cow Ridge lies near the western boundary. This ridge reaches an elevation of over 3400 feet.

Kretchie Mountain, with an elevation of just over 3000 feet, is located in the northern part of this area. The land slopes primarily to the east to an elevation of about 1800 feet in Straight Hollow. Gauley Ridge and Middle Mountain are other outstanding features of Kretchie Mountain.

Many small streams dissect the long ridges

of this area. Spruce Lick Run, Straight Hollow, and Sugar Run are the major creeks. These are all tributaries of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

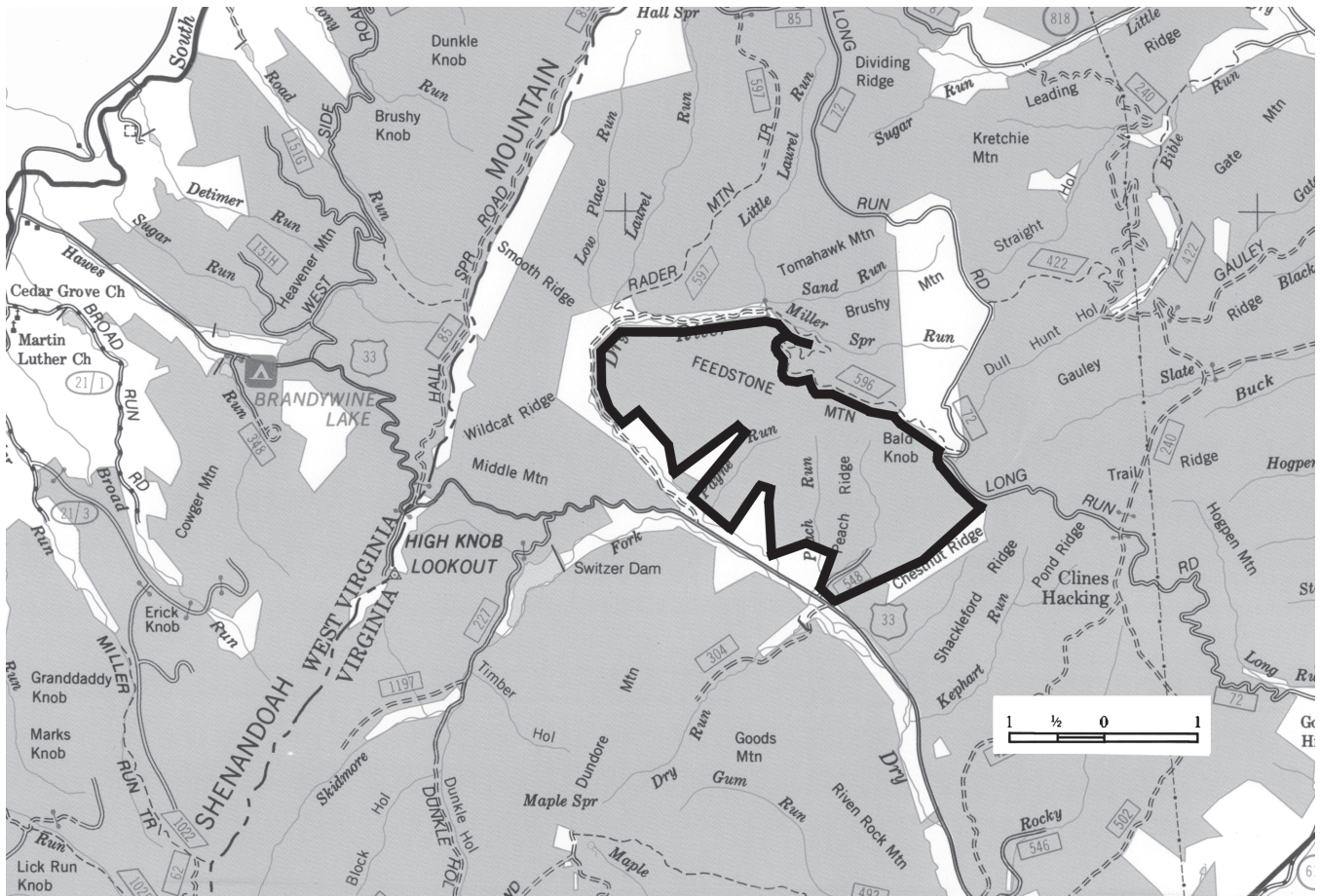
The primary recreational activity of Kretchie Mountain is hunting. The steep ridges and sheltered hollows create ideal game habitat.

Cow Ridge has been identified as a Special Biological Area. The area has also been identified as a Virginia Natural Heritage site. Small pockets of old growth exist along the ridge crest and in some of the more inaccessible hollows.

**Approximate size:** 6677 acres

**Location:** Rockingham County, Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Cow Knob, Rawley Springs



## Feedstone Mountain

Feedstone Mountain is located on the eastern flank of Shenandoah Mountain. The dominant physical feature of this area is Feedstone Mountain itself. This mountain climbs to an elevation of 3860 feet. Peach Ridge drops off Feedstone to the south, and Chestnut Ridge forms the eastern boundary.

Dry River serves as the western boundary. Other small drainages such as Peach Run tumble rapidly from the ridges to join Dry River.

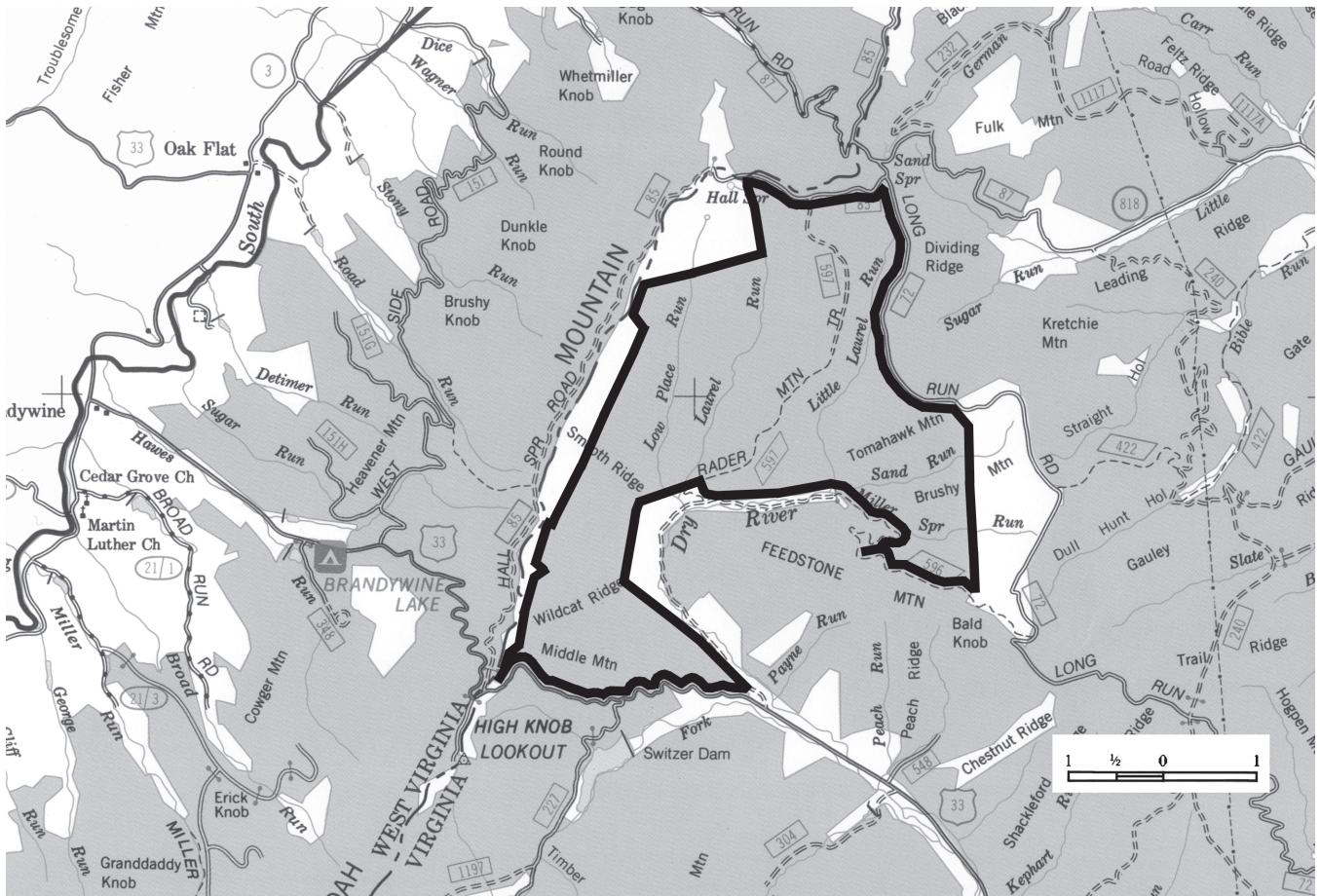
Small stands of old growth are located throughout the area, most notably, in the deep hollows of the many tributaries of Dry River. The crest of Feedstone Mountain is designated as a Special Biological Area.

Recreational opportunities are limited within the boundaries of Feedstone Mountain, as there are no designated trails. However, there is easy access to hunting opportunities along Forest Development Road 72C. This road serves as the northeastern boundary.

**Approximate Size:** 4057 acres

**Location:** Rockingham County, Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Brandywine, Rawley Springs



## Wildcat Ridge

Wildcat Ridge is an uninventoried roadless area that encompasses Wildcat Ridge and Tomahawk Mountain. Wildcat Ridge is found on the east slopes of Shenandoah Mountain north of US 33. This is rugged terrain, with steep side slopes and elevations ranging from 1900 feet to 3700 feet.

Major geographical features include Smooth Ridge, Wildcat Ridge, and Tomahawk Mountain. These ridges are dissected by the numerous headwaters of Dry River. These small tributaries are excellent wild trout streams, and there is good quality habitat for Black Bears.

In addition, Wildcat includes the 2000 acre Little Laurel Run Research Natural Area, established in

1938. RNAs are designated by the Chief of the Forest Service. Such sites are part of a national network designated for research, education, and maintenance of biological diversity on National Forests. RNAs are protected against activities that directly or indirectly modify natural ecological processes. In addition to this there is a 6692-acre forest plan Special Biological Area.

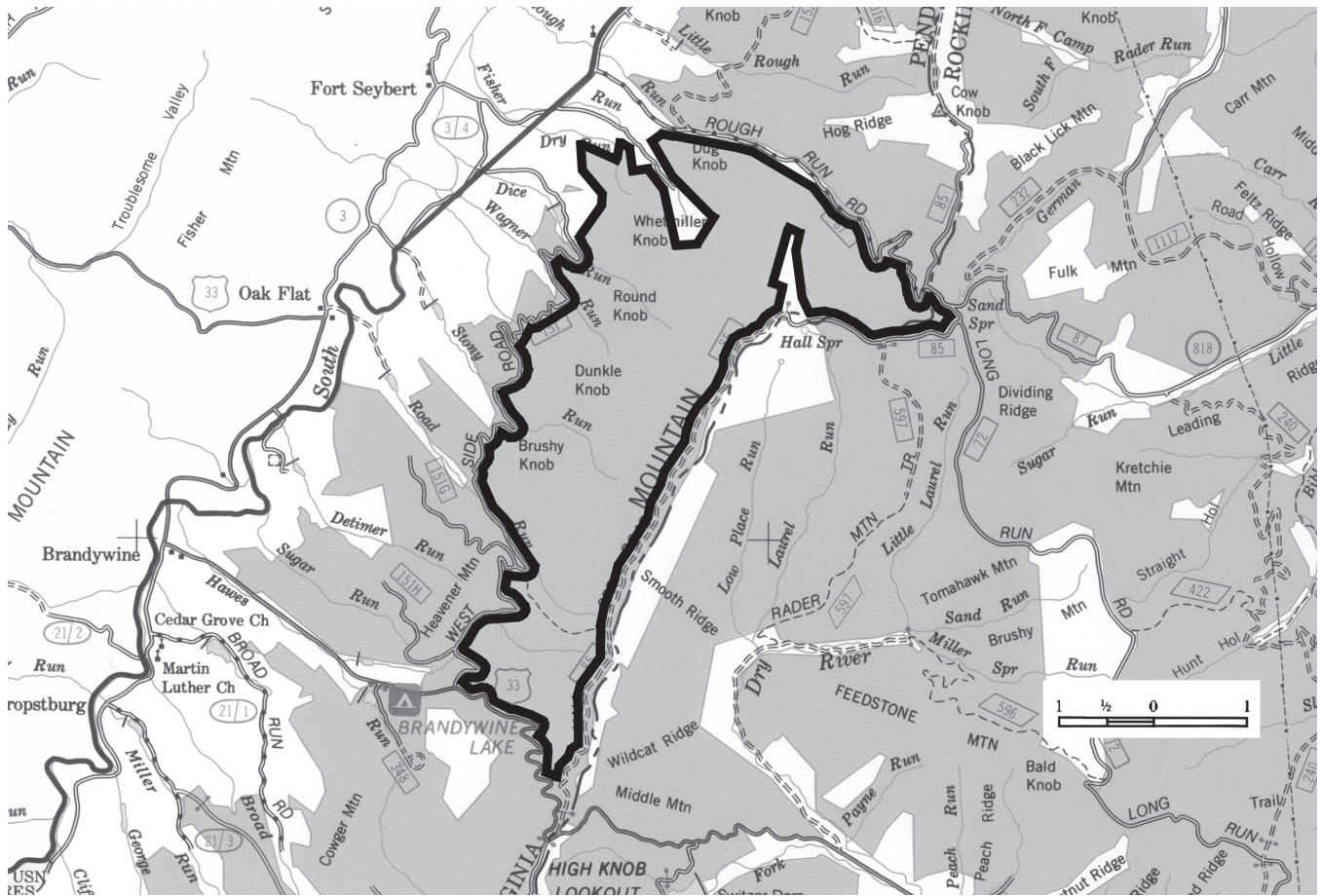
Wildcat Ridge is extremely rich biologically. The area contains 4561 acres of possible old growth forest. State-rare birds, Red Spruce, Cow Knob Salamander, Shenandoah Mountain Millipede, Variable Sedge, and Paper Birch are found here.

**Approximate Size:** 8522 acres

**Location:** Rockingham County, Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Rawley Springs, Brandywine, Cow Knob





## Dunkle Knob

Dunkle encompasses a series of knobs on the western flank of Shenandoah Mountain north of US Route 33. This area includes Dug, Whetmiller, Round, Dunkle, and Brushy Knobs, as well as Dice, Wagner, Stony, and Hawes Runs.

Elevations range from 1900 feet on the western boundary in West Virginia to 3500 feet on the crest of Shenandoah Mountain. Beautiful waterfalls and 2160 acres of possible old growth can be found. The area is characterized by a diversity of vegetation with a variety of forest types.

The Forest Service decided to implement the Dice Run timber sale here in 2003. Logging is scheduled to cut some of the few stands of certain forest types in the area, and includes cutting units in the rich riparian flats associated with Dice Run. Dice Run itself is sparkling and clear with small but gorgeous waterfalls.

The Shenandoah Crest Special Biological Area contains 1983 acres and is located on the upper slopes of Dunkle Knob. There is excellent remote habitat for bears, as well as habitat for the rare Cow Knob Salamanders.

**Approximate Size:** 8398 acres

**Location:** Pendleton County, West Virginia in the North River District

**Topos:** Fort Seybert, Cow Knob, Brandywine

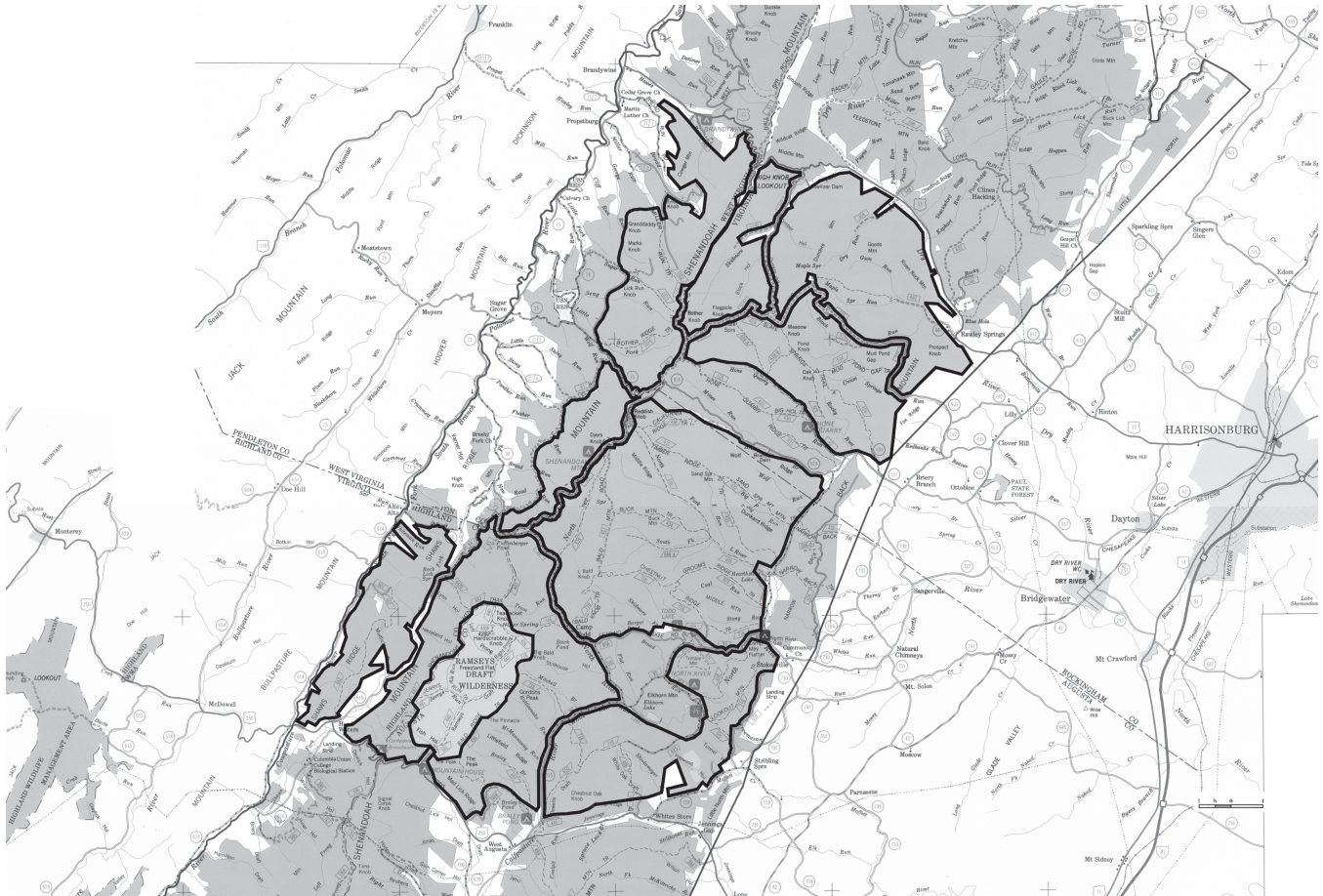


Two trees

Photo by Steve Krichbaum

*“The earth is the Lord’s for he made it”. Wild places are not only sources of joy or places to meet God, but they are important as controls in the great experiment humankind is engaged in, as we seek to turn every part of the planet to human use. Wild places retain the fingerprints of God; Creation as it was intended.*

Anne Nielsen,  
Harrisonburg Mennonite Church Creation Care Group



# Central Shenandoah Mountain Cluster

**Gum Run  
Skidmore Fork  
Little River  
Hankey Mountain  
Shaws Ridge**

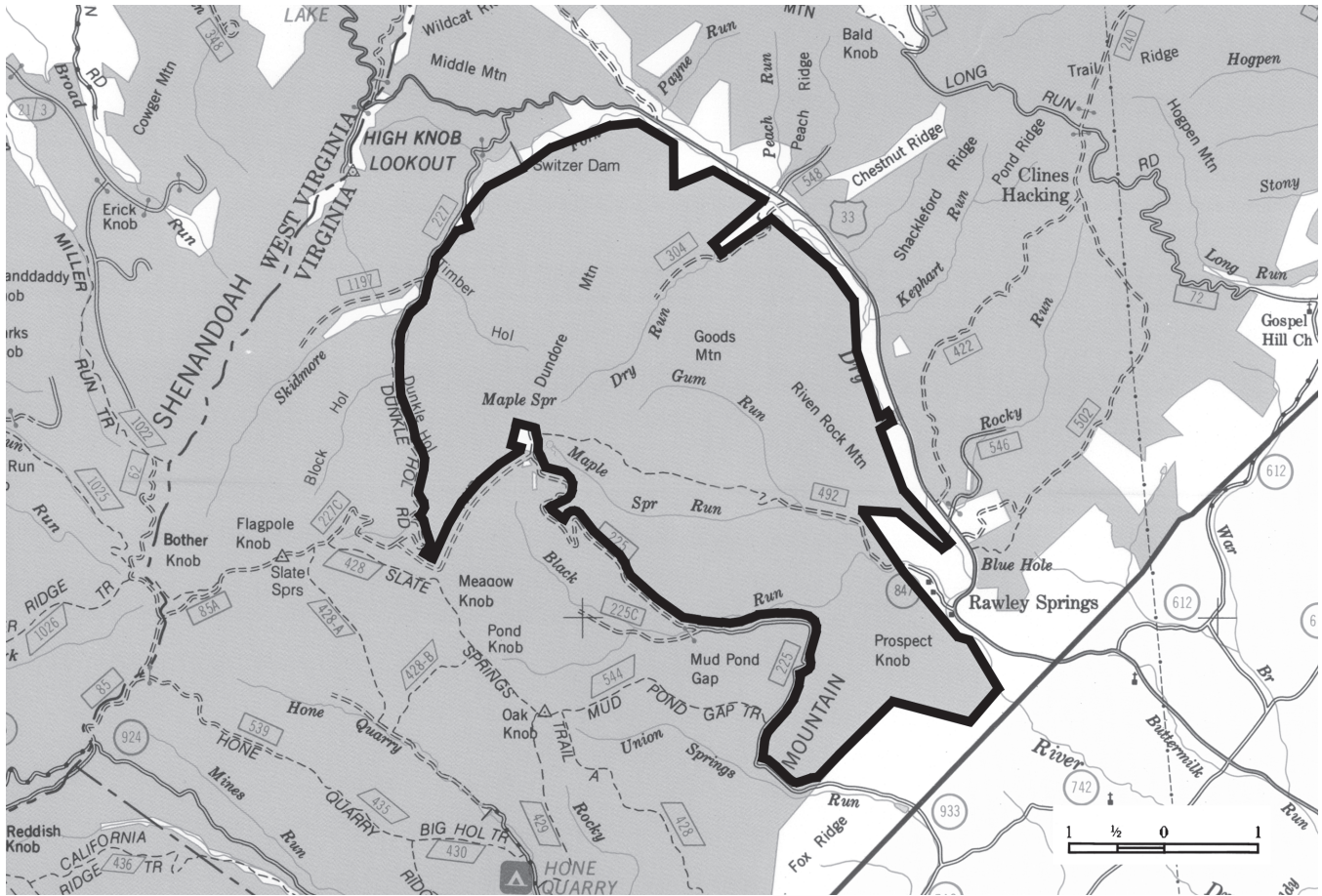
The Central Shenandoah Mountain Cluster represents the largest concentration of roadless wildlands on the George Washington National Forest. Here in the middle of Shenandoah Mountain are nine Mountain Treasures totaling 115,039 acres. These areas are located in both Virginia and West Virginia between US Route 250 and US Route 33.

These lands are located in the North River Ranger District. Headwater drainages flow into the Shenandoah, James, and Potomac Rivers. These watersheds supply drinking water for the communities of Staunton and Harrisonburg.

**Oak Knob  
Dry River  
Broad Run  
Bald Ridge/Lynn Hollow**

Ramseys Draft Wilderness is the only designated Wilderness on the entire Shenandoah Mountain. Here too is the 43,000 acre Shenandoah Crest Special Interest Area, a forest plan-designated Special Biological Area. These treasures are sanctuaries for creatures great and small, from Black Bears to Cow Knob Salamanders.

Some of the highest elevations on the Forest are here, with lengthy stretches of ridge crest rising to over 4000 feet. Popular recreational sites such as Reddish Knob, North River, and Todd Lake are in the vicinity. The Wild Oak National Recreation Trail is located here.



# Gum Run

Gum Run is a large roadless area that has been inventoried by the Forest Service. Bordered by US 33, Gum Run marks the north end of a complex of nearly contiguous roadless areas that stretch all the way to US 250.

Elevations range from approximately 1800 feet near Rawley Springs to over 4000 at the summit of Dundore Mountain. The major ridges include Dundore Mountain, Goods Mountain, and Riven Rock Mountain.

These high ridges are drained by numerous small runs. The major streams include Dry Run, Gum Run, and Maple Springs Run. The western flank of

Dundore Mountain provides ground water protection for Switzer Lake. This reservoir provides water to the City of Harrisonburg.

The remote and rugged nature of the area provides critical habitat for the Black Bear. The Cow Knob Salamander, endemic to the higher elevations in the vicinity of Shenandoah Mountain, is known to reside on the high ridges of Dundore Mountain where it prefers the late successional and old growth mixed hardwoods forests of this high ridge.

This area may contain 5428 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 14,665 acres  
**Location:** Rockingham County, Virginia in the North River District  
**Topos:** Brandywine, Rawley Springs