

## Pedlar Cluster

### **Kelley Mountain The Friar Whites Peak**

The Pedlar Cluster offers diverse recreational activities, beautiful scenery, and a rich biodiversity. The primary recreational trail is the Appalachian Trail. It winds its way about 75 miles across the high ridges, including the high bald of Cold Mountain and the rocky ridge crests of Three Ridges Wilderness and The Priest Wilderness.

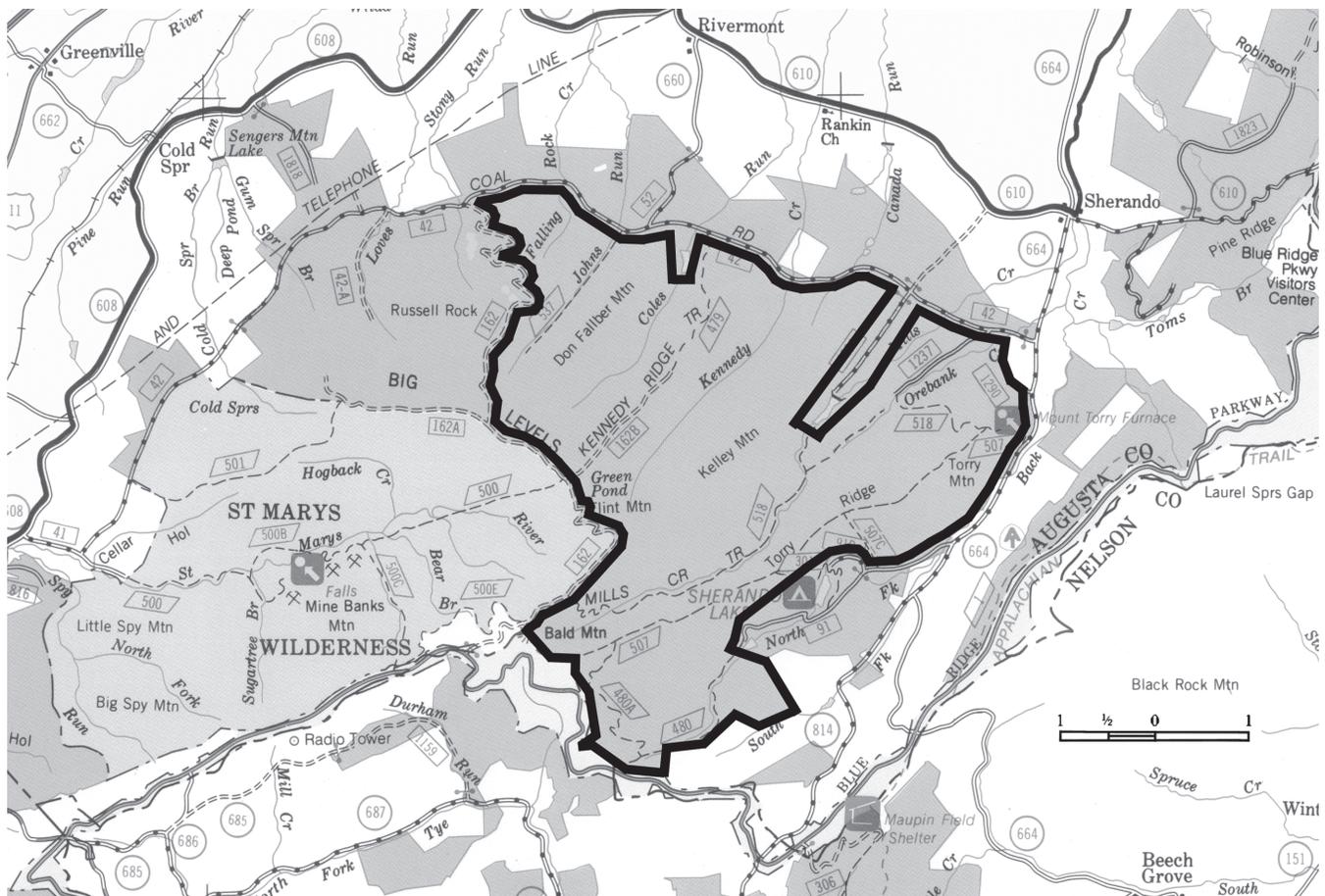
The Blue Ridge Parkway provides another popular recreational activity. The parkway meanders along the crest of the Blue Ridge from Rockfish Gap and the Shenandoah National Park to the James River and the Peaks of Otter and on to its terminus at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Horseback

### **St. Marys Wilderness Additions Adams Peak Three Sisters**

riding is another popular recreational activity on the Pedlar District.

The Cluster is located east of the cities of Lexington and Staunton. From the James River to the south the Pedlar District stretches northeast to the Shenandoah National Park. Beginning with the Three Sisters Roadless Area, adjacent to the James River a series of roadless areas continues northward to Kelley Mountain.

About 20,000 acres is protected as Wilderness. Another 9000 acres is within the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area.



## Kelley Mountain

The Kelley Mountain Roadless Area is located in the southeast corner of Augusta County. Major creek drainages include Kennedy Creek, Mills Creek, and Johns Run. These streams are identified as wild trout streams. There are several small waterfalls located in the upper drainage of Johns Run.

The area is composed primarily of eastern upland hardwoods with pine on the drier slopes. Small pockets of old growth Hemlock are found in the upper drainages of some streams. Dense stands of laurel and rhododendron are found in the understory. The area is underlain by a great diversity of rock types that owe their origin to a wide variety of sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic processes. Many of the

rugged, steep slopes are covered with significant scree slopes. There are rock outcrops that provide tremendous views of the Shenandoah Valley.

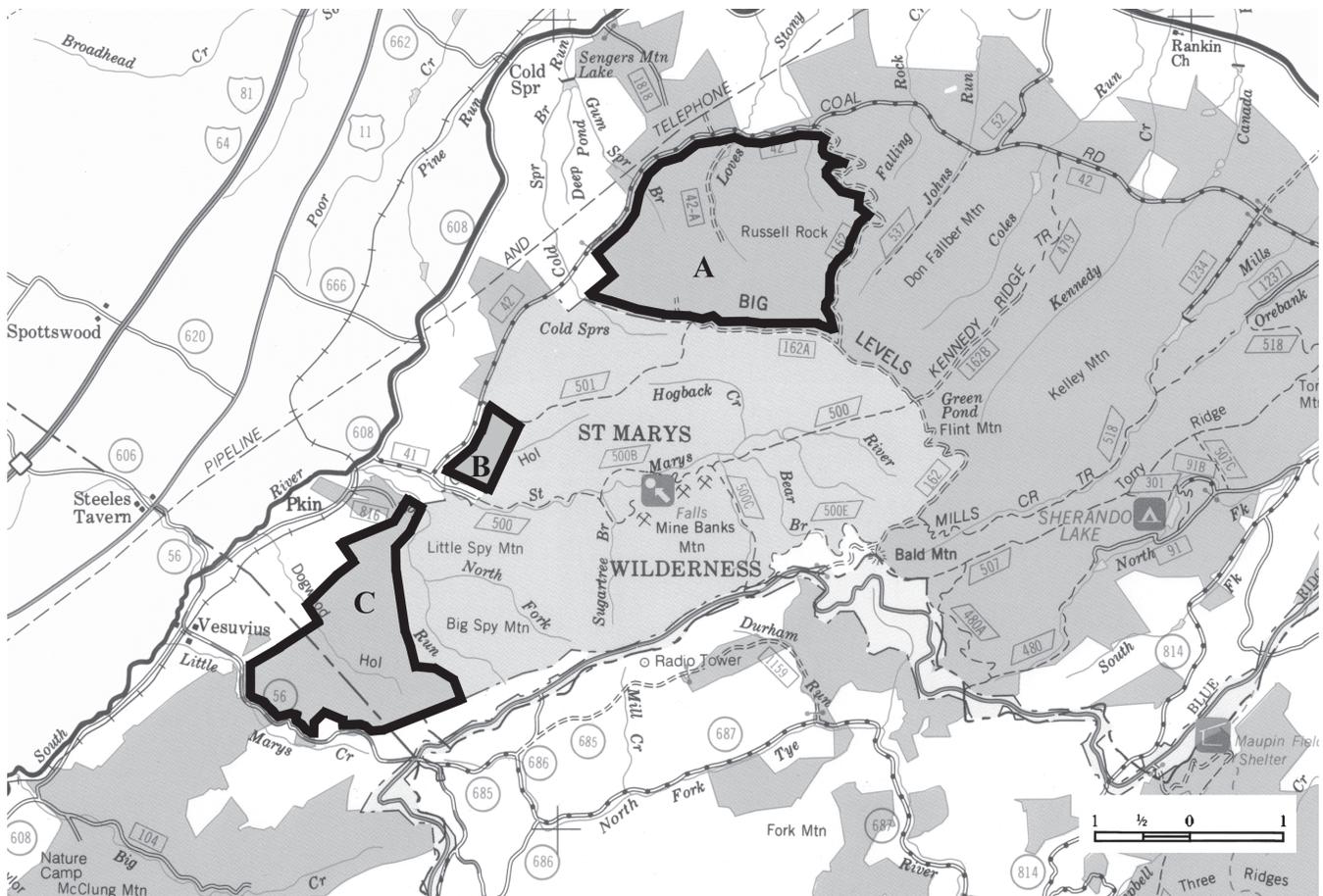
The upper region of the roadless area is known as the Big Levels. Several rare species have been identified by the Heritage Program including Swamp Pink, Variable Sedge, and Large Cranberry as well as possible rare invertebrate species. There is an 8376 acre forest plan-designated Special Biological Area. Kelley Mountain may contain 958 acres of possible old growth.

Recreational activities include hunting, fishing, camping, mountain biking, and hiking. There are about 25 miles of trail with loop hikes available.

**Approximate Size:** 12,895 acres

**Location:** Augusta County, Virginia in the Pedlar District

**Topos:** Big Levels, Sherando



## Saint Marys

Located on the western flank of the Blue Ridge, the Saint Marys Wilderness is 10,090 acres of rugged slopes, deep ravines, and scree. Addition A, located to the north of the Wilderness, includes the extremely inaccessible Russell Rock, a unique geological feature of large jagged boulders. Russell Rock is drained by Loves Run and Stony Run.

There is also a 2910 acre plan-designated Special Biological Area.

Addition B is a recent Forest Service acquisition. The dominant geological feature of the area is Cellar Hollow and the small stream that drains the steep and

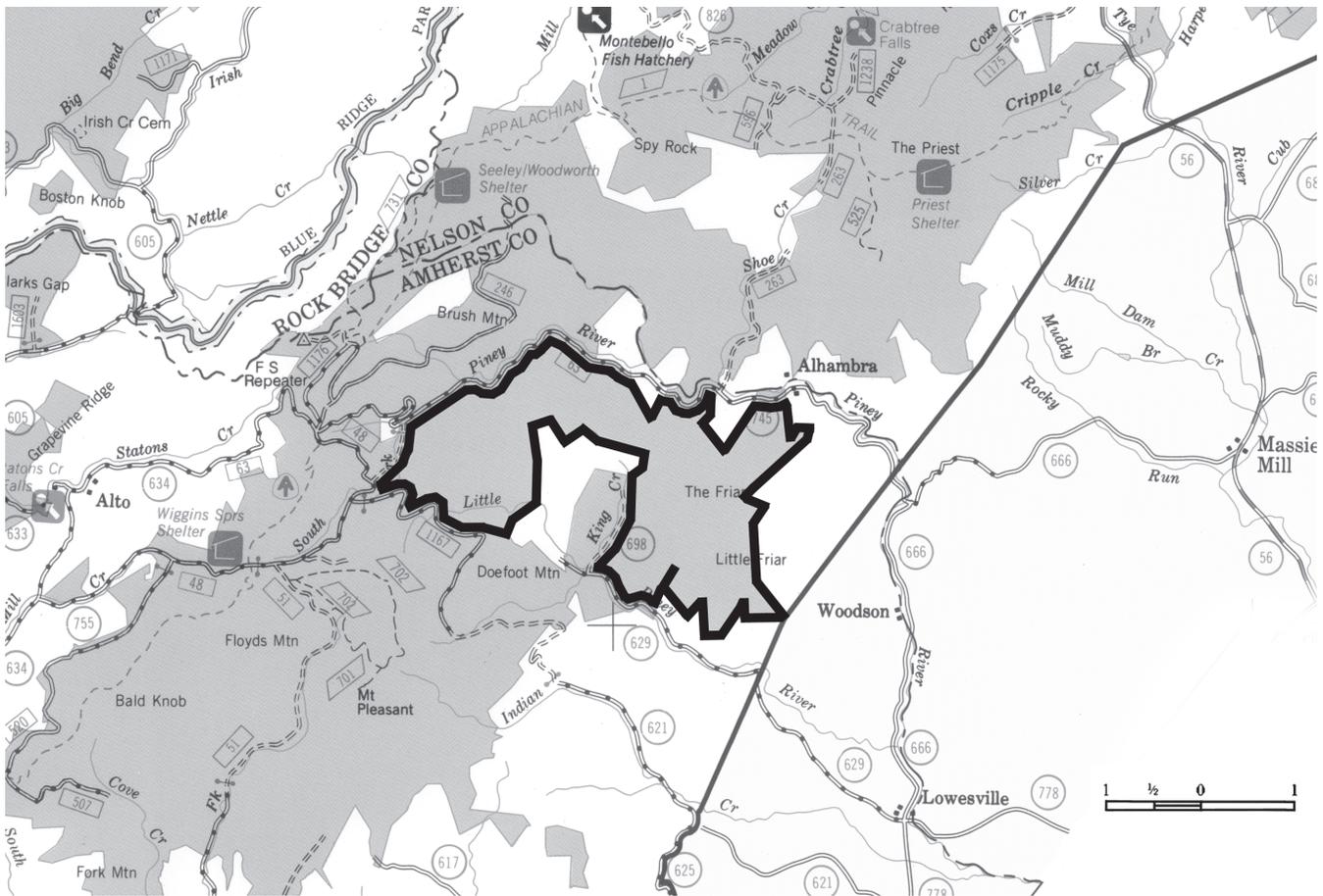
rugged Cellar Mountain. While the area is small the forest is not. Cellar Hollow provides a wonderful refuge for cove hardwoods like Tulip Poplar and Hemlock. Some of these trees are very large.

Addition C is located on the southwestern edge of the existing Saint Marys Wilderness. The area is known for its steep V drainages and numerous scree slopes especially in Dogwood Hollow. There is evidence of past human activities including an old homestead site and sites of past mining activities from the early 1900s. One old mine fissure has become a bat hibernaculum.

**Approximate Size:** Addition A-3008 acres, Addition B-277 acres, Addition C-1508 acres

**Location:** Augusta and Rockbridge Counties, Virginia in the Pedlar District

**Topos:** Big Levels, Vesuvius



## The Friar

The Friar is located in a region locally known as the Religious Range. This area has been expanded to include the Cardinal and its steep northern slope. Other notable peaks in this area include the Little Friar and Doefoot Mountain. The elevations of the Friar range from 1000 feet along the Piney River to almost 3400 feet at the crest of the Friar. The terrain is characterized by steep V-hollows and high ridges.

Chestnut Oak and Scarlet Oak dominate the drier ridge crests while the mid-slope forests are comprised of White Oak, Red Oak, and hickories. In several

locations small patches of old growth occur. The most striking feature of the area is its nearly unbroken forest canopy.

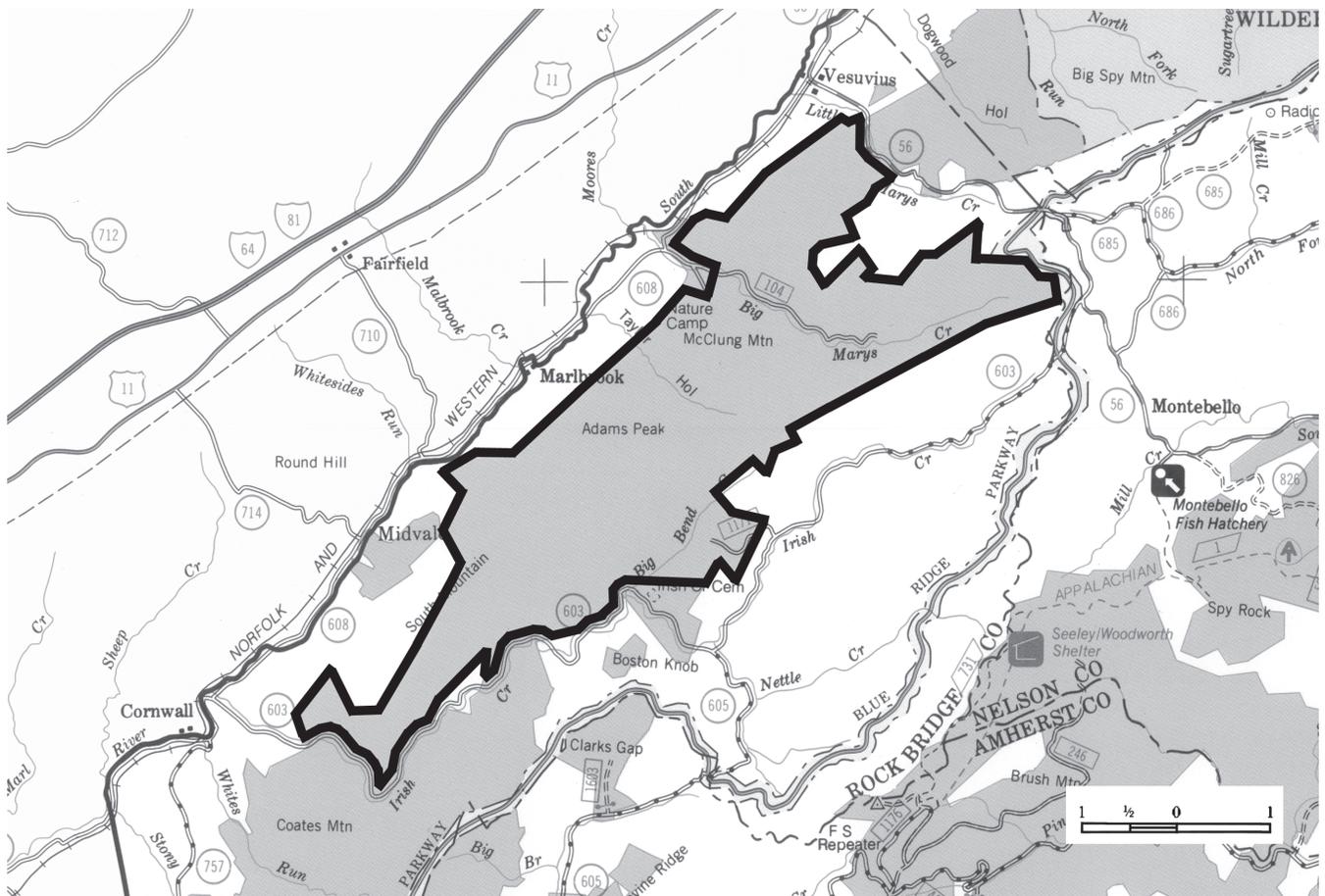
The area is open only to primitive types of recreation. The Friar's steep, rugged ridges have resisted road building and timber harvesting. There are no designated trails. However, several game trails and hunter trails provide limited access to the interior.

The Friar may contain 1592 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 3977 acres

**Location:** Amherst County, Virginia in the Pedlar District

**Topos:** Massies Mill, Montebello



## Adams Peak

The Adams Peak roadless area is dominated by the steep and rugged Whetstone Ridge and South Mountain, and McClung Mountain. Irish Creek forms much of the eastern and southern boundary. Elevations range from 1200 feet to just over 3000 feet on Whetstone Ridge. This long ridge is dissected by numerous deep, narrow drainages with steep side slopes. Rock slides are common on the side slopes.

The entire area is forested by upland hardwoods with Pitch Pine communities occurring on the driest and warmest slopes and ridges. In some of the sheltered hollows, stands of tall cove hardwoods are present. Scenic rock outcroppings and pinnacles occur within the area. The rugged interior provides

habitat for Black Bear and Timber Rattlesnakes.

There are several small prehistoric sites scattered throughout the area. The northern part contained a post road dating from the nineteenth century. A mail carrier on horseback traveled this route delivering mail to several homes located on Big Marys Creek.

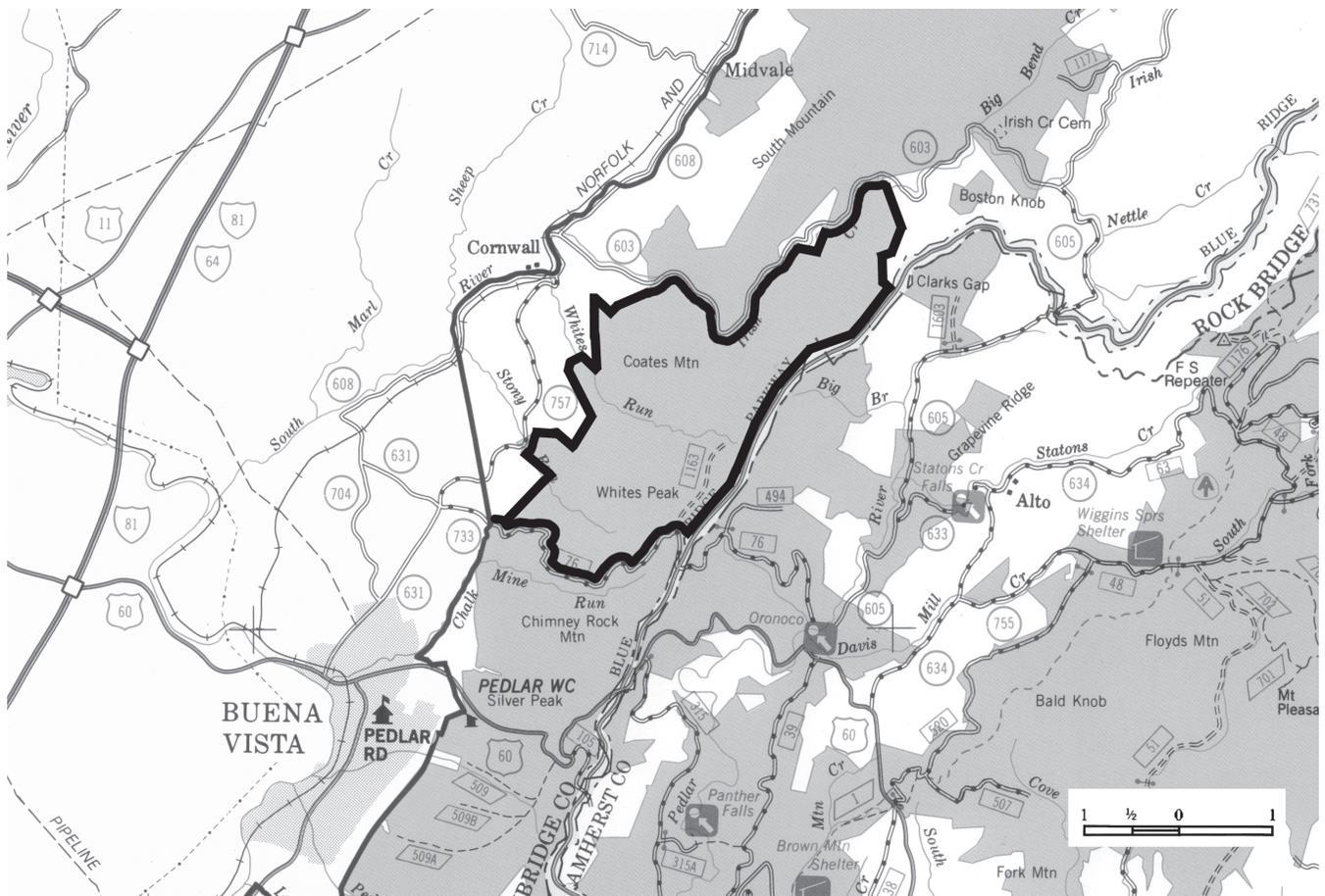
The major recreational activities include hunting, hiking and mountain biking. The long Whetstone Ridge Trail begins at Irish Creek, climbs to the summit of South Mountain, and then follows Whetstone Ridge to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Adams Peak may contain 1066 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 9969 acres

**Location:** Rockbridge County, Virginia in the Pedlar District

**Topos:** Cornwall, Montebello, Vesuvius



# Whites Peak

Whites Peak is the leading edge of a series of small outliers along the western flank of the Blue Ridge Escarpment. These small peaks extend southwest from Buena Vista to the Three Sisters Knobs east of Glasgow. The numerous knobs are bounded by steep, narrow, V-shaped hollows.

Whites Peak includes three such knobs called Coates Mountain, Whites Peak, and McClure Peak. Whites Peak is the highest with an elevation of 2896 feet. These knobs provide scenic backdrops for visitors to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Whites Run separates Coates Mountain from Whites Peak, while Stony Run serves to drain the slopes of Whites Peak and McClure Peak. Both streams are tributaries of the South River.

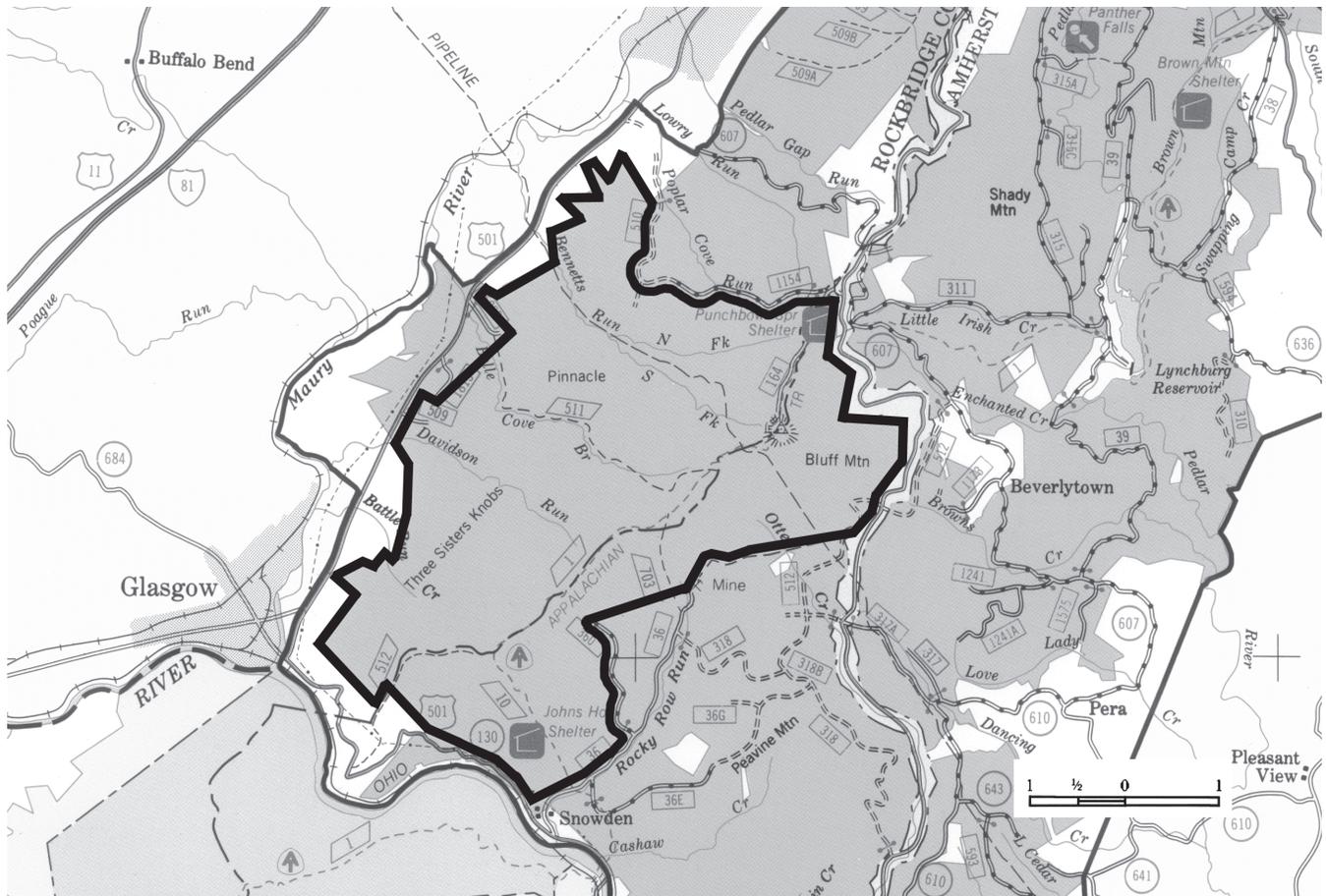
Although close to Buena Vista, Whites Peak is very remote. There are no designated trails, and therefore, opportunities for remote solitude in a backcountry setting are available.

This area may contain 247 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 4614 acres

**Location:** Rockbridge County, Virginia in the Pedlar District

**Topos:** Cornwall



## Three Sisters

Three Sisters forms the northern slope of the James River Gorge, where the James River cuts through the Blue Ridge and debouches into the Virginia Piedmont.

Straddling the high crest of Rocky Row, the Three Sisters area has elevations ranging from almost 3400 feet on Bluff Mountain to less than 900 feet near the James River. This ridge gives rise to several small streams including Bennetts Run, Belle Cove Branch, and Battle Run. These all drain into the Maury River. Bennetts Run supports a small population of native trout. The headwaters of Otter Creek are located

on the eastern slope of Rocky Row Ridge.

Rocky Row Ridge is the most prominent geological feature. The ridge provides outstanding views of the James River and the James River Face Wilderness.

There are several trails that climb the ridge to the crest. The Appalachian Trail also passes through. The trail begins climbing to Rocky Row from the James River. Once on the ridge crest it follows along to the summit of Bluff Mountain.

This rugged mountain ridge has 2777 acres of possible old growth.

**Approximate Size:** 13,028 acres

**Location:** Amherst and Rockbridge Counties, Virginia in the Pedlar Ranger District

**Topos:** Buena Vista, Glasgow



A view from Adams Peak Roadless Area

Photo by Mark Miller

*After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, I felt like our peace and security were shattered. It seemed our world would never be the same. I found myself searching for stability. At the end of that fateful week, my husband and I walked up Benson Run and sat by the stream. For the good part of the afternoon we listened to the trickle of the stream and admired the beauty of the ancient trees. We felt comforted by the stability and solitude of this special wild place.*

Lynn Cameron resides in Mt. Crawford, Virginia