

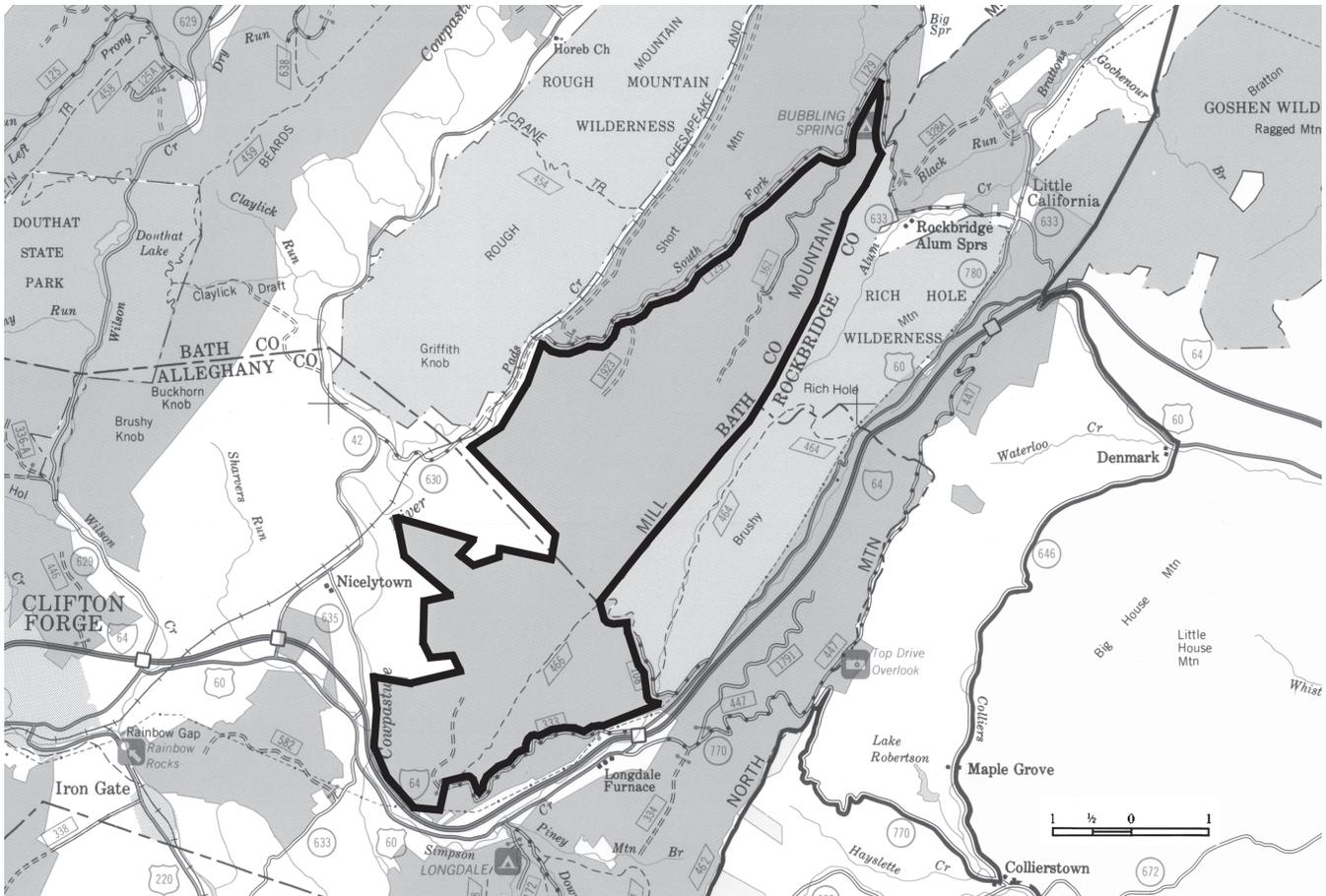
Rich Hole/Rough Mountain Cluster

Mill Mountain Rough Mountain

This cluster is unusual for the George Washington National Forest because there is designated Wilderness. The Rich Hole and Rough Mountain Wilderness areas form the core of this cluster. Combined, these two Wilderness areas total almost 16,000 acres.

Short Mountain Longdale

Mill Mountain is an inventoried roadless area and strong consideration should be given for additional protection to this roadless area. The smaller Rough Mountain would push the size of this Wilderness to over 10,000 acres.



Mill Mountain

Mill Mountain contains mountain ridges with parallel drainages in a contorted arrangement, with spur ridges and associated small drainages falling from the major ridge. Elevations range from about 1200 feet near the Cowpasture River to over 3300 feet on the top of Mill Mountain. Slopes vary from moderate to very steep and are dissected by numerous small and moderately sized streams.

Due to its location adjacent to the Rich Hole Wilderness, consideration should be given to providing additional protection to this roadless area.

Due to its rugged nature, there is only one, little used trail in the area. The White Rocks Tower Trail

parallels the Rich Hole Wilderness boundary to the crest of Mill Mountain and then follows the ridge to FDR 333. Hunting is the primary recreational activity of the area. Mill Mountain's rugged terrain and remote location help to foster a healthy bear population.

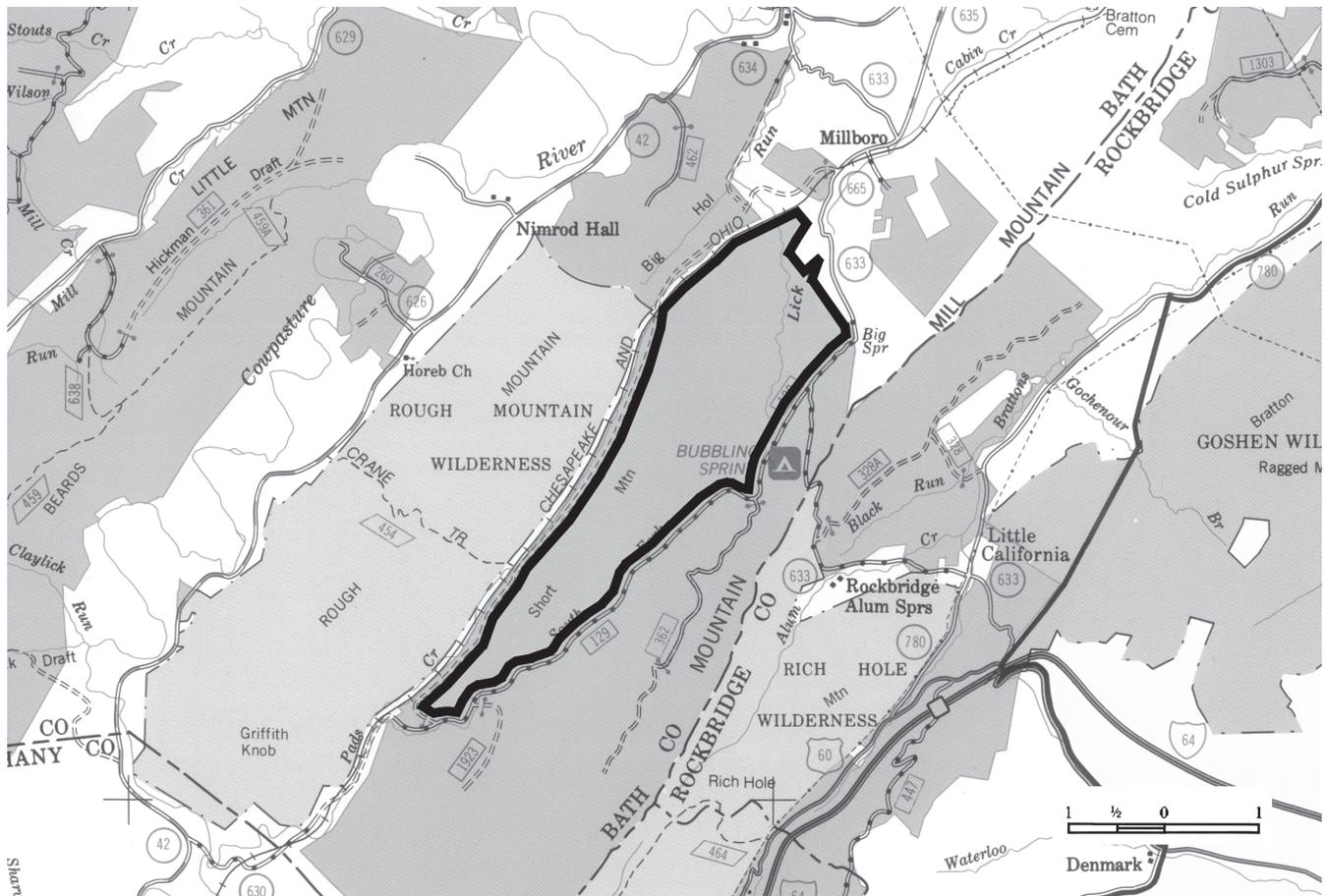
The Bubbling Springs Recreation Area, a small picnic and camping site, is near the boundary of the roadless area.

This area may contain 2376 acres of possible old growth present mainly along the long ridge line.

Approximate Size: 12,498 acres

Location: Alleghany and Bath Counties, Virginia in the James River and Warm Springs Districts

Topos: Longdale Furnace, Millboro, Nimrod Hall



Short Mountain

Short Mountain is separated from the Mill Mountain Roadless Area by FDR 129 and from the Rough Mountain Wilderness by the CSX railroad tracks. Short Mountain itself is the dominant feature of the landscape.

Rising from a low elevation of just over 1300 feet along Pads Creek, this area climbs to an elevation of almost 2450 feet. Short Mountain is a smaller version of the Rough Mountain Wilderness to the west. The mountain is steep with numerous narrow V shaped

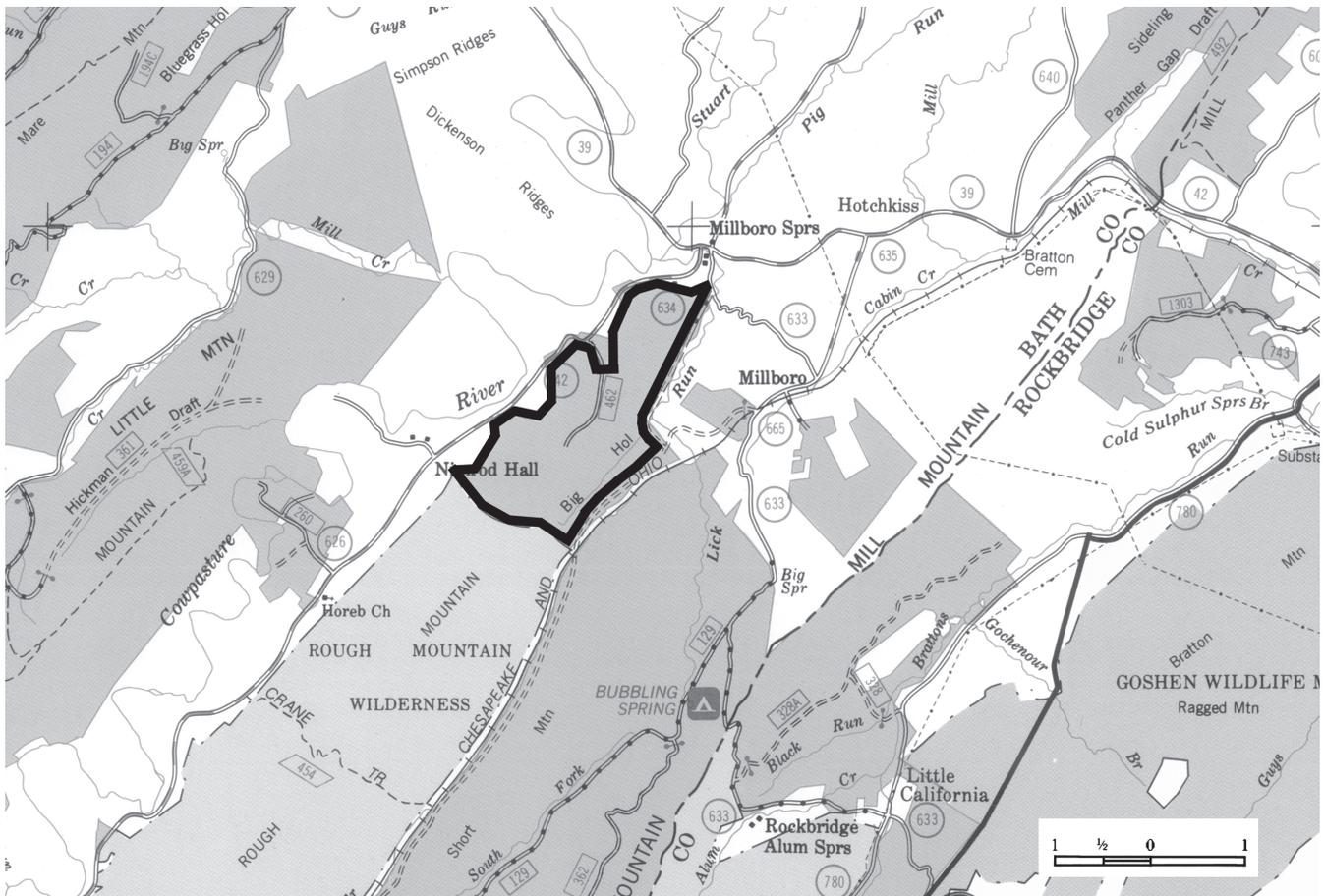
drainages that flow into the South Fork to the east and Pads Creek to the west. Lick Run drains the northern portion of the area.

The forest is composed primarily of mixed eastern hardwoods. The Virginia Natural Heritage Program has identified several species of plants along the South Fork as threatened in Virginia. There are three forest plan-designated Special Biological Areas within the boundaries of this roadless area.

Approximate Size: 4647 acres

Location: Bath County, Virginia in the Warm Springs District

Topos: Nimrod Hall, Millboro

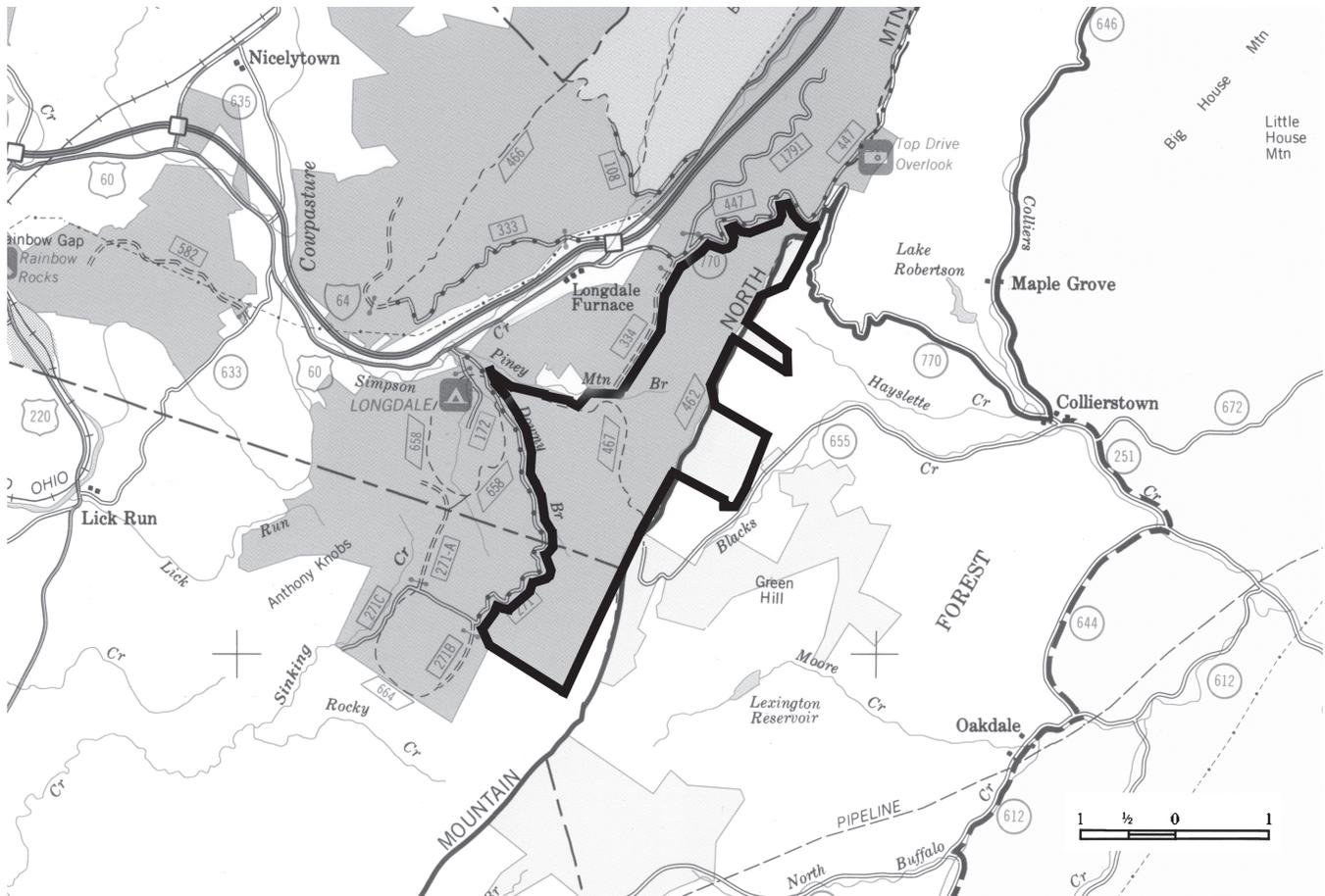


Rough Mountain Wilderness Addition

This Wilderness addition includes the part of Rough Mountain that was not included in the Virginia Wilderness Act of 1988. Designating the addition as Wilderness would protect the upper drainage of Big Hollow.

Elevations range from about 1400 feet near Lick Run to approximately 2100 feet on Rough Mountain.

Approximate Size: 2196 acres
Location: Bath County, Virginia in the Warm Spring District
Topos: Nimrod Hall, Millboro



Longdale

Longdale is located on the western flank of North Mountain, a long ridge that stretches from Eagle Rock to the Goshen Wildlife Management Area. The ridge provides a critical wildlife corridor. Two small portions of Longdale lie in the Jefferson National Forest.

The elevations in this area range from approximately 3250 feet on the summit of North Mountain to less than 1500 feet near the Longdale Recreation Area. The ridge itself is pockmarked with karst formations, and numerous rock outcrops dot the crest.

Piney Mountain Branch and Downy Branch feed the North Branch of Simpson Creek, a tributary of the

Cowpasture River. The area lies in the James River drainage basin.

The slope of the ridge is dominated by eastern upland hardwoods with pockets of cove hardwoods in the protected drainages. Pine and Chestnut Oak are found on the drier sites.

Longdale provides the scenic backdrop for the Longdale Recreation Area. The North Mountain Trail climbs the ridge and then turns north to the old Turnpike Road.

Approximate Size: 4396 acres

Location: Alleghany County, Virginia in the Warm Springs District

Topos: Longdale



Black Bear resting in a tree

Photo by Carrie Crawford

Black Bears are landscape species and require large expanses of habitat for population viability. Thus, the first and foremost habitat ingredient is the presence of millions of acres of forested public lands down the Appalachian chain that provide critical food and cover: food, primarily in the form of acorns from oak forests now reaching middle-age, and cover in the form of refugia from human activities. This species responds positively to a healthy mix of both early and late successional habitats at a broad scale with wilderness serving as the source of refugia (e.g. escape cover, winter dens, and key foods such as acorns) and managed habitats serving as a source of important spring and summer foods (e.g. blueberries, blackberries, pokeweed, and huckleberries). A mosaic of wilderness and managed forests at a landscape level is the best way to ensure a high degree of stability for the future of bears and bear hunting in the southern Appalachians. Building long-term stability for this “umbrella species” should be a high priority; doing so would contribute to the overall biological diversity of the Appalachians.

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