

BICYCLING



North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Bicycle Laws

The bicycle has been legally considered a vehicle in North Carolina since 1929. Bicyclists have full rights and responsibilities on the roadway and are subject to the regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle, where applicable. North Carolina traffic laws require bicyclists to:

- Ride on the right with traffic
- Obey all traffic signs and signals
- Use signals to communicate intended movements
- Yield to pedestrians and emergency vehicles
- Equip the bicycle with a front lamp visible from 300 ft. and a rear reflector which is visible from a distance of 200 ft. at night.

Safety Tip

- Always wear a bicycle helmet
- Use a backpack or bicycle bag to carry goods
- Avoid biking at night
- When riding in a group, ride single file
- Wear bright clothing to increase visibility

Remember, the bicyclist always loses in a conflict with a motor vehicle. Ride defensively and in a predictable manner to avoid accidents. Be courteous to other drivers. Keep traffic flowing by helping motorists pass you in a safe manner.

Resources

Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, and Transylvania Co. Tourism Development Authority
35 W. Main Street
Brevard, NC 28712
(828) 883-3700

Pisgah Ranger District
USDA Forest Service
1001 Pisgah Highway
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
(828) 877-3350

Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education
P.O. Box 1600
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
(828) 877-4423

The Cradle of Forestry
1001 Pisgah Highway
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
(828) 877-3130

Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association
100 S. Broad Street
Brevard, NC 28712
(828) 884-4185/884-5713

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-2804

Contact the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation for maps of cross-state, regional and local bicycle routes, additional information on laws and safety tips, an annual calendar of bicycle events and listings of North Carolina bicycle shops and clubs.

Ⓜ This map was produced by the Transylvania County Office of Planning and Economic Development and the NC DOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. Funding for this Enhancement Project was provided through the NC DOT Transportation Improvement Program. 10,000 copies of this map were printed on recycled paper at \$32 a copy and are distributed free of charge. Published July 1998.

Points of Interest

Brevard

Brevard, the county seat as well as the largest town in Transylvania, is located in the center of the county. Downtown Brevard is a walking kind of place you won't want to speed by. Stop at the Chamber of Commerce for information on the area, see the current exhibit at the Transylvania County Arts Council on Main Street, have a cup of coffee and a slice of pie at one of the many restaurants, browse the antique shops, or just sit in the sunshine of the courthouse steps and enjoy the view.

Brevard Music Center

If you come to Transylvania in the summer, plan to take in a performance at the Brevard Music Center. Established in 1930, BMC draws gifted students from across the nation who, along with professionals, perform full orchestral works, chamber music and opera from late June through mid-August. Tickets may be purchased by mail, phone or from the box office. (828) 884-2019.

White Squirrels

The mountains in Transylvania County abound in wildlife. The wildest of the wild, however, is not always found in the woods, but in the town of Brevard: the white squirrel.

These are not albino squirrels, but true white squirrels with dark eyes. Local legend claims a pair of rare white squirrels were given a Brevard resident, who kept them as pets, eventually freeing them, since they refused to breed in captivity. They have flourished in Brevard ever since.

Pisgah Ranger Station and Davidson River Recreation Area

Located on US 276 a few miles from the gateway to the Pisgah National Forest, these two points of interest offer opportunities to explore the forest habitats and learn about the history and special features of the area. The Ranger Station Visitor's Center provides information on recreational opportunities, including mountain biking, as well as exhibits, a gift shop and a nature trail.

Nearby, the Davidson River Recreation Area includes a large camping area, hiking trails, fishing streams, evening programs and, best of all, warm showers.

Camp sites are available, year-round, on a first-come-first-served basis, but reservations may be made by calling 1-800-280-2267.

Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education

Located off US 276, on Forest Road 470, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission raises thousands of trout here each year for release in western North Carolina streams. Visitors can walk through the hatchery along a self-guided tour and see the fish at various stages of development. In addition, on-going and special programs on topics such as mountain habitats and wild animals are offered.

The Center is open daily, year round. No admission fee is charged. (828) 877-4423.

Cradle of Forestry

This National Historical Site commemorates the birthplace of scientific forestry and forestry education in America. It includes a Discovery Center with exhibits, a film on the history of forestry, and a gift and snack shop. In addition, two one-mile interpretive trails tour the original Biltmore Forest School Campus, founded in 1898. The restored buildings of the school and early 1900 forestry exhibits, with a 1915 Climax logging locomotive and steam engine powered sawmill, are featured. Open April 20-November 3, 9 am-5 pm, daily. Admission: \$4.00. (828) 877-3130.

The Pink Beds

Approximately four miles south of the Parkway, on US 276, you'll see the road markers for the Pink Beds. This is a unique high mountain valley blanketed in a thick cover of rhododendron, mountain laurel and azalea. If you're lucky enough to come here during the spring you'll see for yourself why it's called the Pink Beds.

Can't wait to go back to Transylvania County!



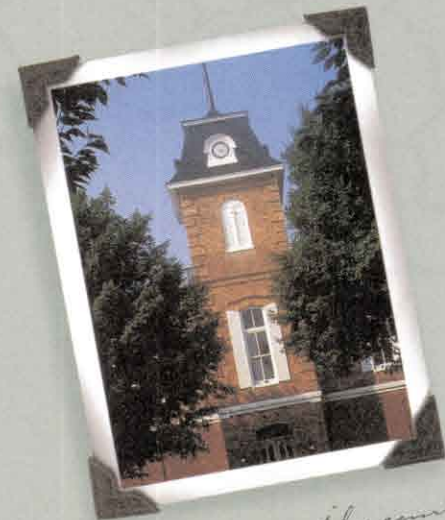
History

When North Carolina seceded from the Union on May 20, 1861, Transylvania County was formed from parts of Henderson and Jackson counties. At that time, the area was inhabited by native Indians and white settlers drawn to the area since the late 1700s by the mild climate, rich soil, abundant wildlife, and game.

In the early 1880s George Vanderbilt, a prominent industrialist, fell in love with Transylvania and purchased 7,282 acres for his palatial Biltmore Estates.

In 1893, Vanderbilt bought the adjacent 80,000 acres, which he named Pisgah Forest, and hired world renowned forester, Gifford Pinchot, and later, Carl Schenck, to manage it. In 1898, Dr. Schenck opened the first US school of forestry on the estate. In 1911, the government acquired 85,000 acres of Vanderbilt's property and established the Pisgah National Forest, largely in Transylvania County.

At the turn of the century, the railroads that opened up Transylvania County to the lumber industry also provided access to tourists. Today, Transylvania County, a popular tourist destination, is known for its fine inns, restaurants and stunning scenery.



Visiting the courthouse in historic Brevard, NC

Cycling Transylvania

Terrain

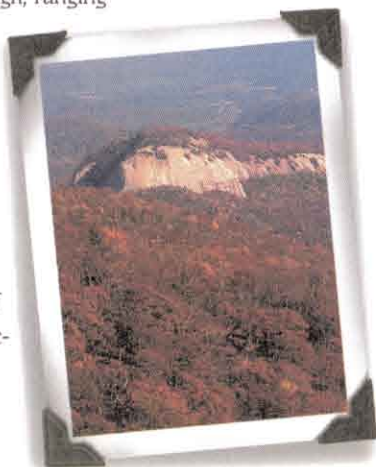
The magnificent rising, falling, rolling, twisting landscape of the Blue Ridge Mountains dominates Transylvania County. Horse Pasture River, off NC 281 south, is the lowest elevation at 1,025 feet, and Tanassee Bald, in the northwest corner of the county, the highest at 6,045 feet. Brevard sits at 2,150 feet.

Climate

From mid-March through early December, temperatures typically range from the mid-sixties through the mid-eighties during the day, and the mid-forties to mid-sixties at night: good weather for biking. January and February are colder and have an average of 15 inches of snowfall.

The transitional seasons of spring and fall are especially good for bicycling with moderate temperatures and relatively low humidity. The fall leaf display, however, brings the peak season for tourists driving on the Parkway. Come to Transylvania in the fall, but plan to enjoy the colors close-up on a bicycle, off the crowded Parkway.

A clear winter day in the mountains can darken in a moment's notice and snow. Likewise, in summer, the weather stays on the edge of humidity and rain, a potent combination for almost daily thundershowers. Rainfall throughout the county is high, ranging from 60 inches near Brevard to nearly 100 inches near Rosman. Despite the often changeable weather, there's plenty of clear mountain sunshine here, and the occasional afternoon shower brings a bounty of wildlife, wildflowers, dancing waterfalls, rivers and rainbows.



A view of Looking Glass Falls

The Routes

Transylvania County offers a full range of bicycling options—from a leisurely ride through a lush and peaceful valley to a challenging climb up the Blue Ridge escarpment. The map on the reverse highlights a 125 mile system of designated routes which connect Transylvania County's towns, crossroads communities and points of interest via more lightly traveled roads.

This system includes five signed county routes, two unsigned routes, and portions of two of the cross-state Bicycling Highways routes. In addition, two mountain bike routes which cover approximately 30 miles are shown.

The descriptions below provide information on the length and difficulty of each route, and include information on points of interest to help you plan your rides. On the road, routes are marked with signs like the one shown to the left. Portions of different routes can be combined to create additional biking options.

County Routes

Route #1: Rosman to Brevard and Penrose

Distance: 20 miles

Direction of travel: south to north

The southern portion of this route provides a charming pastoral ride over bridges and streams through gently rolling terrain marked by wide green pastures. Halfway along the route, after you turn onto Island Ford (110), you'll cross a bridge over the French Broad River near a river access: a fine shady picnic spot.

Further along, the route takes you through a residential section of Brevard, and into downtown, an inviting place to stop, explore, and get refreshments. As you head out of town past Brevard College the road widens to five lanes as far as Old Hendersonville Highway where the road becomes two lanes again. Old Hendersonville runs parallel to the railroad tracks and has some easy twists, turns, and short inclines to the end of the route.

Route #3: Pisgah Forest to Blantyre and Penrose

Distance: 8.5 miles

Direction of Travel: counter-clockwise

This is the shortest loop in the system and is punctuated with deep curves, climbs, views of the French Broad River, farmland and an incredible panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains stretching across the horizon. Take special care on the short section of the route along the busy five lane Asheville Highway, NC 280. Traveling counter-clockwise, this section is mostly a downhill ride, with occasional challenging climbs. Pack water bottles and food: there are no stores or services.

Route #4: Little River to Conneestee

Distance: 20.5 miles

Direction of Travel: clockwise

This route starts on a relatively flat, roughly paved road, and before you know it, you've come upon an expansive view of an easy rolling valley with mountains, mountains everywhere. From then on, it's curves, twists, climbs, some slow easy glides, and lots of tree canopy. Traffic increases along two sections of US 276 near Cedar Mountain and toward the end of the route near Conneestee. This route has a restaurant, gas station and small store near Cedar Mountain.

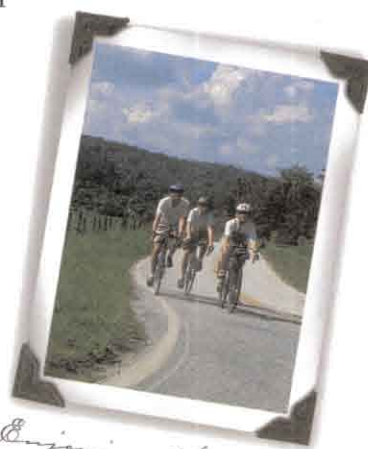
Route #5: Rosman to the Blue Ridge Parkway

Distance: 16.5 miles

Direction of Travel: up

This is pretty much a steady 9% grade climb all the way up to Beech Gap, elevation 5,400 feet. Speed limit for cars is 35 miles an hour, and the twists, hair pin turns, and sharp curves keep it that way. But, what a view!

Perseverance has its rewards. This road is bordered with rhododendron and wild flowers. The lower portion of



Enjoying the quiet country roads

the route follows alongside the North Fork of the French Broad River. Further up, the special way the haze from the Blue Ridge flattens the mountain peaks against the horizon makes this jagged landscape look like cutouts in the sky. Watch for unusual rock formations and listen for the bell-like tinkling of tiny waterfalls. There's a small store at Balsam Grove.

Route #6: Brevard to Rosman

Distance: 16 miles

Direction of Travel: north to south

Starting in downtown Brevard, the route takes you on a pleasant meander through a shaded residential area in Brevard, past the Brevard Music Center, along quiet country lanes, past some charming churches, a country store, and ends in the small town of Rosman. Take care, however, on the short section of US 64 and the two crossings of 64 south of Brevard. There are stores and restaurants in Brevard and Rosman.

Note: This route, together with a portion of Route 1 makes a complete loop from Brevard to Rosman and back.

Bicycling Highways Routes

Ten cross-state routes connect the distant corners of North Carolina via 3,000 miles of lightly traveled, scenic back roads. Two of these routes pass through Transylvania, the 700 mile Mountains to Sea (NC Bike Route 2) from Murphy to Manteo, and the 120-mile Southern Highlands (NC Bike Route 8) which originates at Wagon Road Gap in Transylvania County and terminates in Lincoln. Maps and information on these and other routes may be obtained from the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, P.O. Box 25201, Raleigh, NC 27611, (919) 733-2804, phone, or (919) 715-4422, fax.

Route #2: Mountains to Sea

Distance: 15.6 miles

Direction of Travel: west to east along the Parkway to the border of Transylvania and Buncombe Counties

This is as high and as pretty as it gets: the Blue Ridge Parkway. No commercial vehicles are allowed on the two-lane Parkway, but the road sees plenty of RVs. The

speed limit is 45, but most cars move around 25-30 miles an hour because the terrain is demanding and the beautiful vistas are as plentiful as wildflowers. This is not a road for bicycles during the peak of the fall leaf display.

Riding the Parkway is challenging. Climbs are steep and descents require care to avoid a spill. Also, because there are tunnels on the Parkway, bicyclists are required to have and use headlights. There is one tunnel on this stretch of the road. The only services on the road are at Mount Pisgah, where there is a seasonally operated campground, inn, restaurant and store.

Route #8: Southern Highlands

Distance: 23.5 miles

Direction of Travel: northwest to southeast

From the Parkway you're traveling down US 276 to US 64 at a pretty steep 9% grade all the way. But, you won't want to hurry. There's much to stop and see on this road: the Pink Beds; Cradle of Forestry; Sliding Rock; Looking Glass Falls and the Davidson River Recreation Area. Just off the road is the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education. In addition to all the "roadside attractions," this is one of the main access routes to the Parkway, so the traffic is heavy particularly on "colorful" fall weekends. Take extra precautions, motorists are known to stop in the middle of the road to get pictures.

After you come down to US 64, you have a stretch with heavy traffic. The road levels out then takes some scenic twists and turns as it connects with the rest of the route into Henderson County. There are stores and services at the intersection of US 64 and US 276.

Note: Sliding Rock, a sloping 60 foot smooth rock waterslide that dumps its brave riders into a pool of bracing cold mountain water, is on this route. It's a great place to cool off in summer, and even has a bath house. During daylight hours there is a Park Service Ranger and/or a lifeguard on site. Open daily, year round.

Mountain Bike Routes

There are several suggested mountain bike routes in the Pisgah National Forest. Detailed maps are available at the Visitor's Center on US 276.

All of these routes are on one lane, rutted, hard packed gravel roads that wind, twist, climb, and descend. And, why not? They're

mountain routes with the added attraction of no traffic, plenty of wildflowers and wonderful views blessed with fresh mountain air. There are no services on or near these routes.

Unsigned Routes

Rosman Loop

Starting and ending in Rosman, this 13 mile loop may stand alone or be connected with routes 1, 5 or 6 to extend the ride. Whether you travel clockwise or counter-clockwise, you will encounter long stretches of moderate grades. The route is scenic and traffic is mostly light, so take your time and enjoy the views.

Extra caution is required around Rosman on US 64 and US 178 where the traffic is heavier.

Lake Toxaway Connector

This 11 mile route connects NC 215 to Lake Toxaway, a charming resort area. Although the route winds through several valleys with steep ridges on either side, the terrain is gently rolling and traffic is low, making for a very pleasant ride. This connector is the only recommended way to get to Lake Toxaway as US 64 from Rosman to Lake Toxaway is a narrow, heavily traveled road with a significant amount of truck traffic and should be avoided.



Having a blast at Sliding Rock