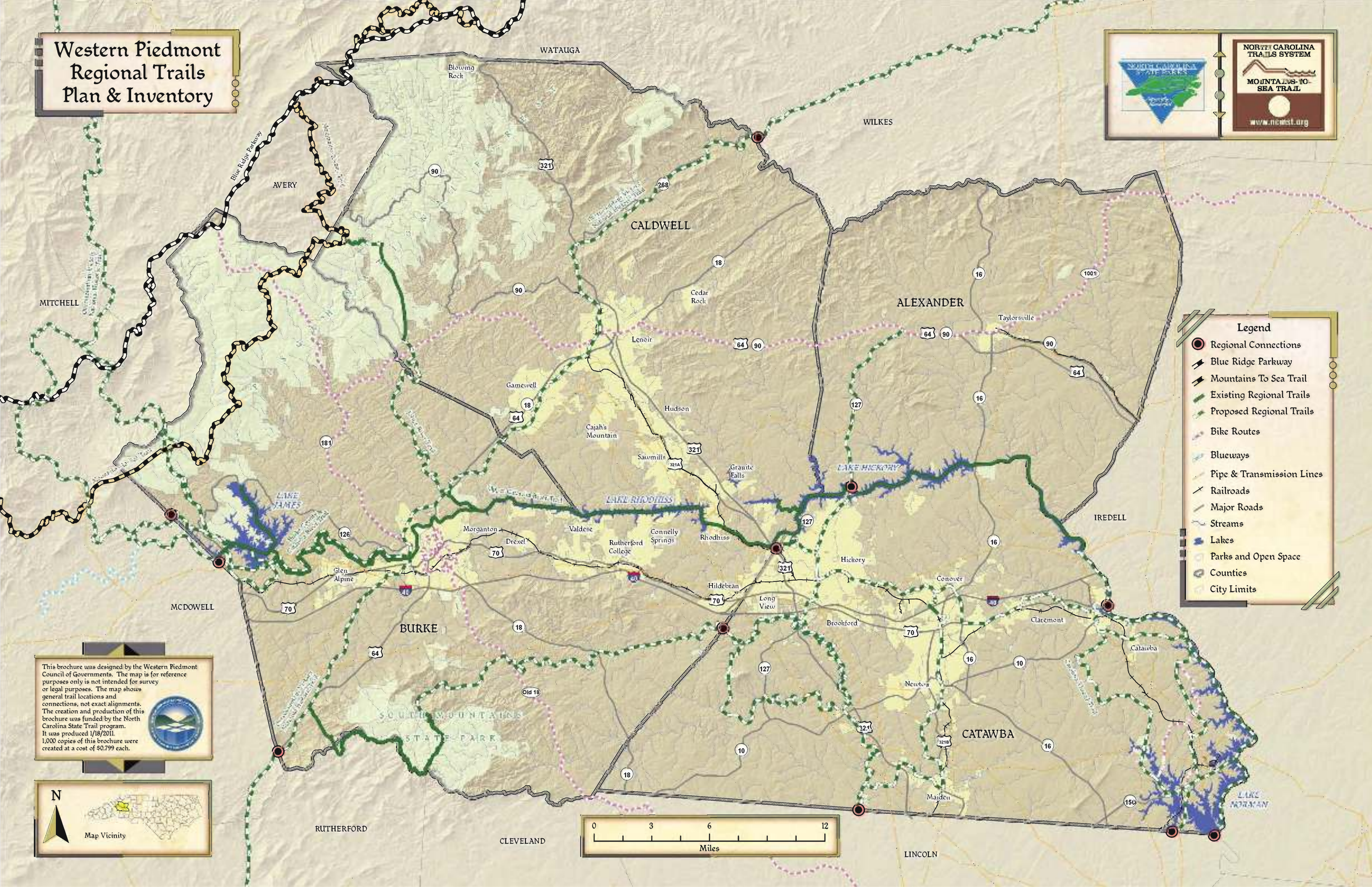



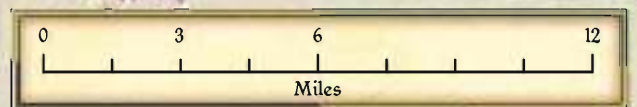
Western Piedmont Regional Trails Plan & Inventory



Legend

- Regional Connections
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Mountains To Sea Trail
- Existing Regional Trails
- Proposed Regional Trails
- Bike Routes
- Blueways
- Pipe & Transmission Lines
- Railroads
- Major Roads
- Streams
- Lakes
- Parks and Open Space
- Counties
- City Limits

This brochure was designed by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments. The map is for reference purposes only and is not intended for survey or legal purposes. The map shows general trail locations and connections, not exact alignments. The creation and production of this brochure was funded by the North Carolina State Trail program. It was produced 1/18/2011. 1,000 copies of this brochure were created at a cost of \$0.799 each.

~ Priority Trails ~

A part of the North Carolina State Trails Program, N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, the **Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST)** stretches 1,000 miles from Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. Currently, more than 500 miles of footpath are built. With temporary connectors on back roads and state bike routes, people can now hike across the state. When completed, the route will pass through 37 counties containing about 40 percent of the state's population. The trail is used by people out for an afternoon stroll as well as those planning to hike the trail from one end of the state to the other. Approximately 28 proposed miles of the MST are highlighted in this Regional Trails Inventory.

The **Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVHT)** is part of the U.S. National Trails System and travels through VA, TN, NC and SC. It recognizes the Revolutionary War Overmountain Men, Patriots from what is now East Tennessee, who crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and then fought in the Battle of Kings Mountain in South Carolina.

The OVHT follows the route from Abingdon, Virginia, fording the Watauga River at Sycamore Shoals through present day Elizabethton, Tennessee, crossing the Doe River twice near both Hampton, Tennessee and Roan Mountain, Tennessee, and ascending over the steep Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina to the site of the Battle of Kings Mountain now within Kings Mountain National Military Park. The trail network consists of a 330-mile corridor, including a 70-mile branch from Elkin, North Carolina, that joins the main route at Morganton, North Carolina.



Fifty-seven miles of OVHT are officially developed for public use, and development continues on the remaining sections. The official sections of the trail were established through agreements with current landowners and often have overlapping designations. Approximately 76 miles of proposed OVHT are highlighted in this Regional Trails Inventory.



The **Carolina Thread Trail** is a regional trail network that will eventually reach 15 counties and over 2 million people. The trails will link cities, towns and attractions. More than a hiking trail, more than a bike path, the Carolina Thread Trail will preserve natural areas and will be a place for exploration of nature, culture, science and history, for family adventures and celebrations of friendship. It will be for young and old, athlete and average. Approximately 122 miles of the proposed 874 mile total Carolina Thread Trail network are included in this inventory.

Also a part of the North Carolina Trail System, the **Upper Catawba River Trail** extends over 91 miles from the Pleasant Gardens Access above Lake James to Lookout Access on Lake Lookout Shoals. With 24 access points, 3 future sites and 4 portages around the dams, the trail covers 31 free-flowing miles and 60 reservoir miles. An additional 22 proposed miles will connect the trail to Lake Norman.

The proposed **Johns River Trail** begins in Collettsville, where roughly three-quarters of a mile of trail have been constructed. It wanders through farmland and wooded areas until it reaches the backwaters of Lake Rhodhiss north and east of Morganton. The Johns River Trail could provide access to the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River, Mountains-To-Sea Trail, Pisgah National Forest and the Upper Catawba River Trail with possible connections to the Morganton trail system. Approximately 25 miles of proposed Johns River Trail are highlighted in this brochure.

The proposed **Burke County Catawba River Trail** would follow the free flowing section of the Catawba River from Morganton west to Lake James where it would connect with a proposed Lake James loop trail and extend into McDowell County. The trail would connect with the Overmountain Victory Historic Trail and the new Lake James State Park. Approximately 26 miles of proposed Burke County Catawba River Trail are highlighted in this brochure.

~ Implementation ~

Implementation of the Western Piedmont Regional Trail Plan will require the efforts of many partners. State and Federal land managers, local governments, land conservations groups, organized trail groups, private property owners, land developers and individual citizens all have a stake and role in the plan.

Local governments in the Western Piedmont region are encouraged to take the following actions:

1. Endorse the Western Piedmont Regional Trail Plan
2. Share the Trail Plan with Parks and Recreation Boards, Planning Boards and other interested parties in their jurisdictions
3. Incorporate the Trail Plan into local land-use, recreation, transportation or comprehensive plans
4. Require trail easements in new developments where applicable
5. Commit to plan, acquire land, design, build and manage recommended trail segments in their jurisdictions
6. Promote the plan on websites and other local outlets
7. Support the efforts of trail advocacy groups in their jurisdiction

~ The Western Piedmont Region ~

The **Western Piedmont Region**, situated in the Midwestern area of North Carolina and including the Counties of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba, is an extremely diverse area. Boasting the states



maximum vertical relief of approximately one mile (from 6000' at Calloway Peak in the northwest to 760' on the Catawba River at Lake Norman in the southeast), the region contains prominent peaks, rolling foothills and reaches into the Carolina piedmont. This extreme difference in elevation across the region provides for widely assorted vegetation and wildlife habitats in addition to extreme hydrographic features such as the Linville George Wilderness Area. These qualities and a temperate climate coalesce to create an outdoor enthusiast's delight. For that reason,

it is imperative that regional leadership team together to preserve these resources and develop outdoor recreation amenities that highlight the region's wealth.

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REGIONAL TRAILS
PLAN & INVENTORY

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation - State Trails Program is working with various agencies across North Carolina to develop regional trail systems that will interconnect in a statewide trail network. The goal of these regional plans is to guide federal, state and local efforts for trail development,



park development and land conservation. Building on the successful Mountains-to-Sea Trail project, the regional plans provide a blueprint for connecting public lands, communities and significant natural features across the state.

Trails provide the communities with many benefits, including public health, economic development, recreation opportunities and transportation options. Developing a coordinated plan for future trails will help ensure efficient use of limited state and local resources.

~ Development of Western Piedmont Trail Plan ~

The Western Piedmont Regional Trail Plan and Inventory was developed by a group of land managers, local governments, State Park staff, land trusts interested citizens and other trail advocates. The NC Division of Parks and Recreation - State Trails Program provided funding and project oversight. The Plan identifies 459 miles of proposed priority trails in the region, shown on the map on the reverse side of this brochure. These trails traverse the Western Piedmont Region and highlight some of the best outdoor opportunities available. Six trails are identified as priority in the inventory, including the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Overmountain Victory Trail, Upper Catawba River Trail, Carolina Thread Trail, Johns River Trail and Catawba River Foot Trail.