

## Directions

### From Asheville:

Take I-26E to exit 40 (Asheville Airport). Turn right on NC 280W. NC 280W becomes U.S. 64W in Pisgah Forest. Stay on U.S. 64W through Cashiers and go another 5 miles. Turn left on SR 1600 at Whiteside Mountain sign. Go one mile and turn left into Whiteside Mountain entrance.

### From South Carolina:

Take SC 28N, bear right on SC 107 and drive past Oconee State Park. Continue to the traffic light in Cashiers. Turn left on U.S. 64W and follow above directions.

## Prepare for Your Visit

For information about the forest and maps, contact the Nantahala Ranger District:

90 Sloan Road  
Franklin, NC 28734  
p: (828) 524-6441  
e: nantahalar@fs.fed.us  
w: www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc



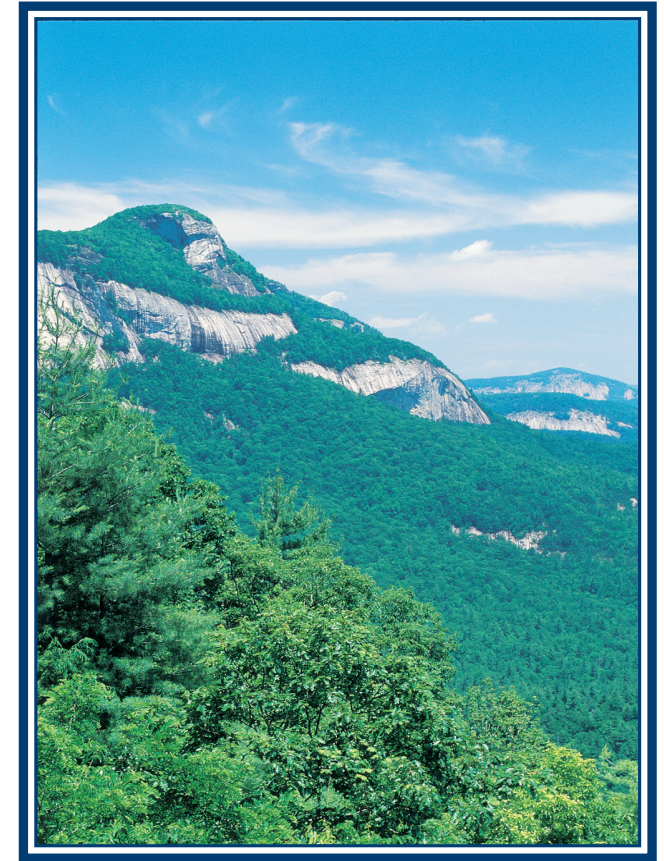
Excellent maps for hiking in this area:

- USGS Highlands Quad (topographic map)
- National Geographic's Nantahala and Cullasaja Gorges Trail (#785)

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# WHITESIDE MOUNTAIN

## A Landmark to Discover



**D**iscover a variety of wildflowers and million-year-old rock cliffs that reach to 4930 feet



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Southern Region



A landmark along the Eastern Continental Divide, Whiteside Mountain rises to an elevation of 4,930 feet. The mountain's cliffs look like sheets of ice draped across the mountain. This magnificent rock is more than 390 million years old.

**Attractions:** A two-mile loop trail climbs above sheer 750-foot high cliffs and offers outstanding views to the east, south and west. Whiteside Mountain Trail is rated "more difficult" because of its steepness.

**For Best Enjoyment:** Whiteside Mountain's beauty draws many visitors and the area can get crowded. If possible, consider visiting the mountain on off times, like weekdays.

**Location:** Whiteside Mountain is located south of U.S. 64 between Highlands and Cashiers.

**Day-Use Fee:** There is a fee for day use at this recreation area. If you visit frequently, you can purchase an annual pass from the ranger station.

## Jewel of the Appalachians

**M**illions of years ago and before North America existed, Whiteside Mountain began as a huge mass of molten rock deep in the earth. The rock cooled, and then heat, pressure and uplifting metamorphosed the granite rock into a granitic gneiss (pronounced "nice"). In the following ages, the overlying material eroded to expose this majestic rock.

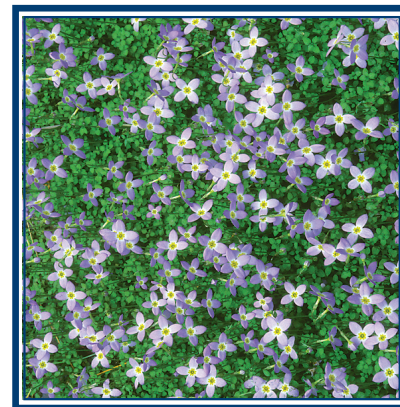
You can best see the solid rock foundation of this mountain on the south-facing cliffs, where wind and drier conditions limit plant growth. White streaks of quartz and feldspar line the face.

## Wildflowers on Mountain Cliffs

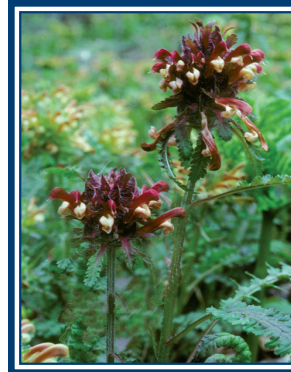
**A** variety of wildflowers and different plant communities grow on Whiteside Mountain. The mountain's variety of soils, light and moisture create a mixture of plant habitats.

The north-facing, moist slopes have a northern hardwood forest, where you can walk under yellow and black birch, eastern hemlock and Fraser magnolia trees. Scattered in the forest's understory are witch-hazel, minnie-bush and wild raisinshrubs. On the forest floor, you can discover speckled wood-lily, white snakeroot, Curtis' goldenrod and bluets. At the summit is an old-growth northern red oak forest. Notice the red oaks' figures. Strong winds and ice storms shaped the trees into twisted forms. Growing in this forest's understory, you will find serviceberry, false Solomons-seal, wild sarsaparilla, whorled aster, white wood aster and wood betony.

Across the southern slopes is a heath bald shrub community. These clusters of shrubs include Carolina rhododendron and two highly fragrant plants, smooth and clammy azalea.



bluets



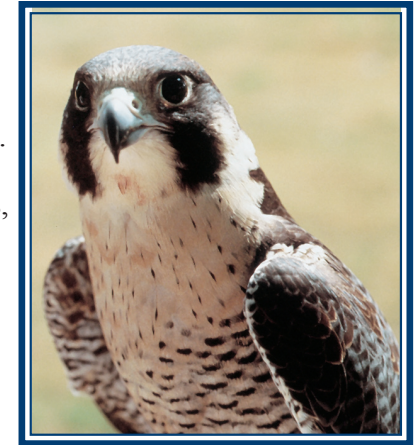
wood betony

A fragile rock-face community blankets the southern mountain face. Mats of spikemoss and some wildflowers — pale corydalis, dwarf dandelion, gray beard-tongue and graniticdome-goldenrod carpet this dry rocky face.

## Home for Falcons

**D**uring the spring and summer, you may see peregrine falcons flying above or sitting on rock outcrops. Through the endangered species program, the falcon was reintroduced in 1985 to Whiteside Mountain, part of the bird's native range.

From January until summer, peregrines — one of the world's fastest and most beautiful birds — return annually to nest on rock ledges. Because peregrines are nervous parents, climbing routes near nesting sites are closed during nesting. Please see maps on display at parking lot for current closures.



peregrine falcon

## History of the Land

**P**rior to the Seventh Cherokee Treaty of 1819, the mountain was part of the Cherokee Nation.

During the mid-1800s, the state of North Carolina issued more than 20 separate land grants to early settlers along the eastern slope of Whiteside. Following the Civil War, Macon County Land Company purchased the rest of Whiteside Mountain for about 7 cents an acre.

In the early 1900s, the land became part of the enormous estate of the Ravenel family, who summered in the Highlands area.

Later, a private corporation bought the land and used it as a tourist attraction. Shuttle buses carried people to the mountain's peak over a road built for this purpose.

In 1947, the mountain was purchased for its timber and logged. The U.S. Forest Service then acquired the land in the 1970s, and it became part of the Nantahala National Forest.