

McDowell County
Tourism Development Authority

25 West Main Street
PO Box 1567
Old Fort, NC 28762

www.McDowellNC.org

888.233.6111 • 828.668.4282



Proud to be part of the



Mountain Hideaways, Lakes & Treasures



**A Travelers Guide to
McDowell County, North Carolina**

www.McDowellINC.org • 888.233.6111 • 828.668.4282



Welcome to McDowell County

Be inspired by great southern hospitality, scenery and mountain culture in McDowell County, North Carolina. Our independent character began with its founder, “Hunting” John McDowell, in the mid-1700s. Upon seeing the land, he named his new home “Pleasant Gardens” to describe the lush green river valley framed by the Blue Ridge Mountains.

McDowell is a community set apart by a diverse countryside, pleasant year-round climate and rural heritage. More than 70,000 acres of the Pisgah National Forest are found here. During the summer, the beautiful green canopy invites you in to discover little known hiking trails and rushing creeks – some leading to picturesque waterfalls. Winter weather is no excuse to stay indoors. It’s an ideal time to explore the Pisgah Forest Curtis Creek Recreational Area, an 8,100-acre forested refuge for hikers and primitive campers and a well-kept secret among trout fishermen. The ridge top trail along Mackey Mountain presents stunning 360° views including Mt. Mitchell. Hikers should keep in mind, this 17-mile rustic trail includes a bear sanctuary... another reason to explore the beauty in the winter season.

Various waterways feature spectacular Lake James. Tucked away in rolling hills at the base of the Linville Gorge, Lake James encompasses 6,510 acres with more than 150 miles of shoreline. The scenic vistas and lake are the centerpiece of Lake James State Park. These cool mountain waters beckon enthusiasts to enjoy a day of swimming, skiing and boating. And if you’ve left the boat at home,

Photos by Roger Engelke

seasonal canoe rentals are available. Infuse your senses in this 585-acre park with the sights and smells of the Park’s sandy beaches, fishing piers, wildflower-lined walking trails and abundant wildlife. Rangers guide monthly walks to educate nature enthusiasts on the plants and animals native to the site. Don’t forget the picnic basket! Picnic tables and primitive campsites are amenities found here.

McDowell County is proud to be a part of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area designated in 2003. These ancient landscapes and age-old traditions are an important part of our national heritage and of the entire western region of North Carolina. Our gifts of nature, mountain arts and crafts, our special style of mountain music and song, local customs and our shared Native American history are worthy of protection and preservation for future generations.

Awareness, appreciation and preservation of our natural resources, history and culture are all important to the people of McDowell County, forever renewing the spirit and refreshing the soul. Be inspired, explore and relax in McDowell County... The Natural Choice!



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Historic Marion

Historic Downtown Marion is the county seat and includes the courthouse at the corner of Main and Court streets. The town was built on 55 acres of land donated by one of the founding families of the area, descendants of Colonel John Carson. Carson's home, c. 1793, survived generations to share its history and culture with visitors today. The home, once part of a large plantation, operates as a museum and important genealogical resource. Open May–October, Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. The site is also included in the *NC Civil War Trails* guide.

The McDowell Arts Council is located on Main Street at 50 S. Main and includes an exhibition gallery with local and regional artists' works. Throughout the year, other events are enjoyed in the Greenlee Theater adjacent to the gallery.

Event Listings

Marion:

www.DowntownMarion.org

McDowell:

www.McDowellArts.org



McDOWELL COUNTY

Activity Centers

MARION SKATE PARK

828-652-3001

Outdoor park located adjacent to the McDowell County Recreation Center on E. Court Street.

RECREATION CENTER

828-652-3001

Outdoor pool, basketball court, gymnasium located on E. Court Street, Marion.

SPORTS COMPLEX

828-652-2626

Baseball and softball tournaments throughout the year; snack bar. Located in Marion off N. Main Street on Finley Road, adjacent to Ivans Restaurant.

LIGHTNING LANES BOWLING ALLEY

828-652-2626

Adjacent to Ivan's Restaurant and McDowell Sports Complex at 622 Finley Road, Marion.

YOGI BEAR'S JELLYSTONE CAMP RESORT

828-652-7208

Swimming pool and children's pool, waterslide, fishing lake, pedal boats, miniature golf, nature trails, horseshoes, volleyball, shuffleboard, pool tables, gameroom/arcade and snack bar. In Marion, off NC 226 South, turn onto Fairview Road and follow signs to 1210 Deacon Drive.

MOUNTAIN PARADISE CAMPGROUND

828-756-4085

www.mountainparadisenc.com

Outdoor swimming pool and waterslide, miniature golf and gameroom.

YMCA OF WESTERN NC

828-659-9622

Indoor track, basketball courts, climbing wall, indoor swimming pool, workout space and a variety of daily classes.

Agritourism

BEE SWEET HONEY & CRAFTS

828-668-7117

Honey and honey related products and gifts.

BUCK CREEK TROUT FARM

828-724-9612

CROOKED CREEK GENERAL STORE

828-668-4364

Homemade goodies and local goods/produce.

ELLIOTT'S TROUT POND

828-724-1806

FLETCHER'S GREENHOUSE

888-724-4642

Plants and flowers.

GANT'S NURSERY

828-738-4381

Shrubs and trees.

GILLIAM'S NURSERY

828-668-4985

Variety of plants and shrubs.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS & HORSES

828-738-0707

Walk-about farm and more.

HENRY'S FARM FRESH PRODUCE

828-456-6282

Bruce's Fabulous Foods

Bruce's Fabulous Foods – Home of 101+ Cheesecakes



Bruce's eclectic lunch fare and one-of-a-kind cheesecakes may be enjoyed in historic downtown Marion at 63 S. Main Street. The growing assortment of delicious, specialty cheesecakes will satisfy everyone at your table. Lunch daily, Monday–Friday, and catering services are available.

828-659-8023



Blue Ridge Parkway Communities

Little Switzerland and Linville Falls are located in the northern section of McDowell County along the spectacular Blue Ridge Parkway. The town of Little Switzerland comes alive each year in late April. Views from these locations are stunning throughout the year and visitors enjoy hiking trails and cycling along the Parkway. Activities, attractions, food and unique lodging are scattered throughout this area. Don't forget to visit the NC Minerals Museum and the historic Orchard at Altapass!

Further north, famous Linville Falls flows through the picturesque Linville Gorge, and the quaint village of Linville Falls is just one-half mile south of the Parkway exit. There are several hiking trails with views of this rare wilderness and waterfall. Stop by the visitor center to pick up trail maps and information before hiking into the gorge area.



McDOWELL COUNTY

Little Switzerland Book Exchange



3,500 feet above sea level, in the resort village of Little Switzerland, North Carolina, the Book Exchange features over 100,000 titles and used, new and collectible books. Join us for lunch and a literary break from the modern world in the luxury of our reading rooms and broad, open porches. We're just off the Blue Ridge Parkway at Milepost 334.

828.765.9070 • LSBookExchange.com

McINTYRE FARM

828-298-8429

Wholesale nursery stock.

MEADOWBROOK NURSERY/ WE-DU NATIVES

828-738-8300

Featuring native plants.

ORCHARD AT ALTAPASS

828-765-9531

Heirloom apples, gifts and entertainment.

PAINTER'S GREENHOUSE

828-668-7225

Herbs, plants and more.

PEACEFUL VALLEY FARM

828-668-7411

Farming demonstration, tours and classes.

RAILROAD CROSSING DAYLILLIES

828-652-2624

RAINBOW GARDENS

828-668-4011

Aquatic plants.

SOUTH CREEK VINEYARDS & WINERY

828-460-8120

Wine tasting, tours and sales.

WILLIAMS FARM

828-724-9759

Heirloom apples.

Attractions

Buried Treasures

CAROLINA EMERALD MINE & VEIN MOUNTAIN GOLD CAMP

828-738-9544

EMERALD VILLAGE

828-765-6463

www.emeraldvillage.com

HEATHER GROVE MINE

828-738-3373

www.heathergrovegold.com

LINVILLE CAVERNS

800-419-0540

www.linvillecaverns.com



Big Lynn Lodge

An old-fashioned country inn with rooms, cabins & suites. Dinner & breakfast included in rate.

800-654-5232
BigLynnLodge.com

Orchard at Altapass

We offer “the real stuff” – historic storytelling, hayrides, artisan demonstrations, live traditional mountain music, mountain apples, monarch butterflies, family fun.

888-765-9531
AltapassOrchard.com



Historic Downtown Old Fort



Visit this charming town with a fascinating history, railroads, museums, arts & crafts. Discover why this arrowhead is in town-square and who moved the geyser!

828-668-4244 • OldFort.org



Linville Caverns

McDowell County is home to NC's ONLY show caverns... Linville Caverns!

Experience the wonders that nature created on the “inside” of our mountain.

Guided tours into Humpback Mountain take visitors along a smooth walkway beside an underground stream. Stalactites, stalagmites, a vast array of mineral colors, the “Bottomless Pool,” various cave life such as trout and bats, and a glimpse of “total darkness” are all part of your underground trip. These natural limestone caverns remain a constant 52° year-round, so bring a jacket and your camera and explore the mysteries of our subterranean ecosystem.

Located on scenic US 221 just 18 miles north of Marion, the caverns are open daily from March–November & open on weekends only December–February.

800-419-0540
LinvilleCaverns.com



LINVILLE MOUNTAIN GEM SHOP

828-756-7206

THE LUCKY STRIKE

828-738-4893

www.theluckystrike.com

Train Depots

THE MARION DEPOT

828-652-3551

www.downtownmarion.org

Owned by the city of Marion, the depot is the oldest surviving depot, c.1860, on the western rail line. Take the “Walking Tour of Historic Marion” and stop by.

OLD FORT'S TRAIN STATION & MUSEUM

888-233-6111 • www.mcdowellnc.org

Located in the heart of town, directly behind the historic “Arrowhead,” this depot houses a railroad museum, the McDowell County Tourism Authority and the Old Fort Chamber of Commerce.

Campgrounds

Privately Owned Campgrounds

BEAR DEN CAMPGROUND

828-765-2888 • www.bear-den.com

BUCK CREEK CAMPGROUND

828-724-4888

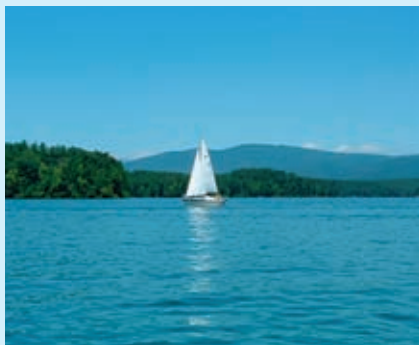
www.buckcreekcampground.com

Lake James

Lake James is tucked away in rolling hills at the base of Linville Gorge and offers something for everyone who enjoys outdoor recreation and water sports. The breathtaking mountain scenery is visible anywhere on the lake while you enjoy fishing, boating, skiing or canoeing.

Covering 6,510 acres, with over 150 miles of shoreline, Lake James is the centerpiece of Lake James State Park, located on NC 126. The Park is 565 acres and offers a variety of activities. Swim along the sandy beach area, hike trails lined with rhododendron and azaleas or fish the cool mountain waters. Largemouth Bass are the most sought after fish in the lake. However, you'll also find Walleye, White Bass, Crappie, Bluegill, Catfish and record-setting Muskellunge. The Park includes 20 campsites and picnic areas. Check with the park rangers for guided hikes throughout the year.

828-652-5047
www.NCSParks.net



McDOWELL COUNTY

BURNETTE'S LANDING

828-652-3531

CATAWBA FALLS FAMILY CAMPGROUND

828-668-4831

www.catawbarivercamping.com

COVE CREEK RV PARK

866-668-7505 • 828-668-7507

www.covecreekrvpark.com

YOGI BEAR'S JELLYSTONE CAMP RESORT

828-652-7208

www.jellystonemarion.com

MOUNTAIN PARADISE CAMPGROUND

828-756-4085 • 828-652-9893

www.mountainparadisenc.com

MOUNTAIN STREAM RV PARK

828-724-9013

www.mountainstreamrvpark.com

NORTH STAR CAMPGROUND

828-724-4798

SKY ISLAND RETREAT

828-668-4928

www.skyislandretreat.com

TRIPLE C CAMPGROUND

888-747-2520 • 828-724-4099

Public & Primitive Camping

Be certain you know facility rules and restrictions. Websites shown provide details and fees, if any.

CRABTREE MEADOWS

828-675-5444 • www.nps.gov

Catawba Falls Campground

Open year-round. Quiet & peaceful family campground located on the Catawba River. Cabin rentals available. Close to major attractions.

828-668-4831
TheCatawbaFalls.com



CURTIS CREEK CAMPGROUND

828-652-2144

www.nps.gov

LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

828-652-5047 • www.enr.state.nc.us

LINVILLE FALLS CAMPGROUND

828-298-0398 • www.nps.gov

LINVILLE FALLS WILDERNESS AREA

828-652-2144 • www.nps.gov

Cycling

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

828-259-0701 • www.nps.gov

Designated bike route providing challenging climbs, downhill plunges, gentle rides and breathtaking scenery. The Parkway offers 470 miles of picturesque travel across North Carolina and Virginia.

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL

Two segments of this 700-mile route are in McDowell County. The Craggy Pinnacle segment follows the Blue Ridge Parkway from Asheville, past Buck Creek Gap at NC 80, to Little Switzerland. The route includes a 30-mile climb, gaining 3,000' in altitude, and a 14-mile downhill ride. The Brown Mountain Lights segment continues on the Blue Ridge Parkway to Linville Falls at the northern tip of McDowell County and on into the foothills via NC 181. The route includes several gentle descents, easy climbs and a quick 15-mile downhill ride.

Cove Creek RV Park & Campground

South of Old Fort, exit 73/I-40. Peaceful with colorful views. Discounts year-round.

866-668-7507
CoveCreekRVPark.com



Crescent Resources

Fed by three mountain rivers and surrounded by inspiring views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Linville Wilderness Area, Crescent's Communities on Lake James are committed to preserving the natural beauty of the land... from the gracious mountains to the majestic Pisgah National Forest and the gently winding Catawba River. Featuring some of the most sought after waterfront real estate for sale in North Carolina, Lake James is just 50 miles southeast of Asheville, NC, and 90 minutes west of Charlotte.

Crescent's Communities – 1780 and Old Wildlife Club – range in size from 2 to 18 acres allowing you the time and space you need to build a mountain retreat that will be treasured for generations. Crescent's guiding architectural vision is focused on preserving the land so the Lake James you fall in love with today is the one you'll enjoy for years to come.

No matter where you look, it's all here. At Lake James.

866-375-0065 • LakeJames.com



Festivals & Special Events

Mcdowell County hosts a variety of special events throughout the year. One of the first is the annual NC Gold Festival in April, celebrating the state's gold history. Until the California Gold Rush, North Carolina provided the majority of the nation's gold.

Pioneer Day, also in April, is a long-standing event commemorating the lifestyle of the early settlers to the area. Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort hosts this unique celebration. Experience old-timey mountain culture, music and art.

Downtown Marion hosts a summer concert series on the first Friday of each month. The concerts are staged on Main Street at town square. Free admission.

October is a month-long party as the leaves slowly change color. To honor this show, both Old Fort and Marion host downtown festivals. Old Fort's Octoberfest takes place each year on the first weekend of the month, followed by Marion's Mountain Glory Festival, the second weekend.

Listings for special events may be found on-line for both Downtown Marion and the McDowell Arts Council.

www.DowntownMarion.org
www.McDowellArts.org



McDOWELL COUNTY

LAKE JAMES ROAD (NC 126)

A designated bike route circling scenic Lake James. Portions are infrequently traveled by motorists. Lake James offers 150 miles of perimeter road and takes the rider through wooded areas with occasional views of the lake.

OLD US 70

Gated to prevent access by motor vehicles, this unused stretch of highway passes through national forest lands and offers excellent views and quiet rides. Park in Old Fort and cycle west on US 70 then right onto Old US 70. Follow along Mill Creek until reaching a dead end sign. Continue past the gate. For the next 3.75 miles you will enjoy panoramic views from places like Point Lookout. For mountain bikers, turn right onto Old #10, a state-maintained gravel road which makes an excellent return route to Old Fort.

LAKE TAHOMA ROAD (HWY 80)

828-652-2144

Recently designated as a bike route. However, riders should be cautious. Lake Tahoma Road is a tough, steep climb heading north to the Parkway. The return trip is a rapid descent down toward Marion. You may call Fuller's Action Cycles to find out more on local cycling activities at 828-652-5358 or visit www.fullercycles.com.

Fishing & Watersports

Also visit the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for state guidelines, www.ncwildlife.org.

LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

828-652-5047 • www.ncparks.com
At the base of Linville Gorge you will find a 6,510-acre lake with more than 150 miles of shoreline. Scenic vistas of the Appalachian Mountains with 565 wooded acres for canoeing, picnicking, swimming, camping and hiking. Boat Access: Black Bear Boat Access Area, Linville Access Area and Hidden Cove Access Area.

FISHING ON LAKE JAMES

All Wildlife Resources Commission regulations apply. A fishing license is required. Cool, deep

waters and warm surface waters provide a variety of sport fishing. Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass, Walleye, White Bass, Bluegill, Robin, Catfish, Muskellunge, Bream, Sunfish, Perch, Crappie and Channel Catfish.

Public Trout Streams

- Stocked

LITTLE BUCK CREEK

Game lands portion. 4 miles with tight creek, well-stocked.

NORTH FORK CATAWBA RIVER

Headwaters: go to North Cove School at S.R. 1569, 11 miles.

ARMSTRONG CREEK

2 miles with large holes.

MILL CREEK

Upper railroad bridge to US 70 bridge. 6 miles.

- Delayed Harvest

CURTIS CREEK

5 miles with easy access.

- Catch & Release/Artificial Lures-Only Waters. Season is year-round. Fish may not be harvested or possessed. Lure restrictions are artificial lures with one single hook only.

NEWBERRY CREEK

3 miles stocked with Brook Trout.

WILD TROUT WATERS

No closed season. Daily creek limit is four with minimum size of 7". Lures are restricted to artificial lures with one single hook only.

MACKAY CREEK

Gameland section.



BUCK CREEK

Game land section, 200 yards along NC 80.

CURTIS CREEK & TRIBUTARIES

Game land areas.

ARMSTRONG CREEK

Access via US Forest Service Trail 223.

CATAWBA RIVER

www.mcdowellinc.org

Game land section. Refer to web site.

Trout Ponds & Farms**BUCK CREEK TROUT FARM**

2525 Buck Creek Road (NC 80).

ELLIOTT'S TROUT POND

Buck Creek Road (NC 80). South of Mountain Stream RV Park.

HARRIS CREEK TROUT POND

Huskins Branch Road, off US 221 North.

Golf**MARION LAKE CLUB**

828-652-6232

Semi-private facility located on the shores of scenic Lake James overlooking Linville Gorge. Par-70, 18-hole course. Clubhouse and pro-shop. Located on NC 126, east of Marion.

OLD FORT GOLF COURSE

828-668-4256

Public, 9-hole, par-72 course. Western North Carolina's highest rated 9-hole course. Tee times and carts not required. From I-40, Exit 73 and turn south on Bat Cave Road. Left onto Old Fort-Sugar Hill Road and left onto Golf Course Road.

LINVILLE FALLS CLUB

828-668-4282 • 828-756-7001

Formerly Blue Ridge Country Club, this spectacular 18-hole course is located between North Cove and Linville Falls on Hwy 221 North adjacent to the Inn at Blue Ridge. Renovations are in process.

Hiking

For additional information on trails, contact us or log onto www.nps.gov.

ARMSTRONG CREEK

3640' • 6 miles • Easy to Moderate
Primitive hiking on Armstrong Fish Hatchery Road. Trail begins past hatchery parking lot.

BAD FORK

2940' • 8 miles • Moderate
Primitive trail connects Woods Mountain and Armstrong Creek Trails. NC 226-A to Armstrong Fish Hatchery Rd. 3 miles to trailhead on left.

BETSY RIDGE

3160' • 9 miles • Easy to Moderate
Black Mountains view, meets Little Buck Creek Trail ending at Woods Mountain Trail. US 221 North, left on Tom's Creek Road. Right onto first dirt road, head is second road on left.

KITSUMA PEAK

Short Hike

20 minute trail. Breathtaking views and unusual Carolina hemlocks. Take I-40 west to Ridgecrest Exit. Turn onto Old US 70, road is blocked. Park at road end.

LEAD MINE GAP

5 miles • Moderate

Mixed forest environment, long range views. Hwy 70 to Curtis Creek Road, east of Old Fort. Trailhead approximately 8.5 miles. Trail ends at Hickory Branch Trail, after 2 miles trail rejoins Curtis Creek Road at lower point.

LITTLE BUCK CREEK

5.8 miles • Moderate to Strenuous
Excellent views of Marion, Lake Tahoma and Black Mountain range. From US 70, west of Marion, turn right onto NC Hwy 80, passing Lake Tahoma on right. Cross bridge over Buck Creek, turn right onto dirt road. Take left at first intersection and go 1.5 miles to trailhead (turnout with USFS sign and gate).

MACKAY MOUNTAIN

16 miles • Moderate to Strenuous

This trail is located in a bear sanctuary. Take

Hampton Inn

Convenient location from I-40, Exit 85. Beautifully appointed suites/rooms, complimentary breakfast, free wireless internet, HBO, ESPN, CNN, in-room coffeemakers, hair dryers, irons and ironing boards, micro-fridges, fitness center, indoor pool and whirlpool, free local calls, restaurants nearby and on-site washer/dryer.

828-652-5100

HamptonInn.com



appropriate precautions on trail. Spectacular views. US 70, east of Old Fort to Curtis Creek road, turning left. Trailhead is 9 miles at entrance of Sugar Cove Road.

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL

Varying Lengths and Skill Levels
Two segments of this 700-mile route are in McDowell County. The Craggy Pinnacle segment follows the Blue Ridge Parkway from Asheville past Buck Creek Gap at NC 80 to Little Switzerland. The route includes a 14-mile steep downhill grade. The Brown Mountains Light segment continues on the Parkway to Linville Falls at the northern tip of McDowell County and onto the foothills area via NC 181. Route includes several gentle descents and easy climbs.

NEWBERRY CREEK

www.nps.gov/ovvi

4300' • 5 miles • Easy to Moderate
Scenic trail ends at Blue Ridge Parkway. Take US 70 West to Curtis Creek turning right. Left at Newberry Creek Road (FS 482-A). Go 4 miles to end. Trailhead begins at end of road.

Hiking, Cycling & Waterfalls

The trails and waterfalls in the region vary from a strenuous walk into the Linville Gorge/Linville Falls to easier hiking trails at Kitsuma Peak or Tom's Creek Falls. There is a large assortment of wildlife and plant life to discover throughout the county. Bird watching is another popular activity to include while meandering through the mountainside. The Overmountain National Historic Victory Trail is a well-known historic trail as is the Mountains-To-Sea Trail. Portions of both trails are located here. A complete listing is on the web site www.mcdowellinc.org or call 888-233-6111 to receive one by mail.

Cyclists travel the Blue Ridge Parkway, with its numerous scenic overlooks in the northern section of the county, taking you from the Mt. Mitchell area, through Little Switzerland and into the Linville Gorge area. Scenic Highway 80 in the Pleasant Gardens community is popular. The winding, two-lane road takes you past the former casino on Lake Tahoma, shown on the cover, and intersects the Blue Ridge Parkway. Of course, a ride on Lake James Road circling the scenic lake

community is a relaxing way to spend your time.



McDOWELL COUNTY

OVERMOUNTAIN VICTORY NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

www.nps.gov/ovvi
Varying Lengths and Skill Levels
Historic trail covering four states and 300 miles runs through McDowell County between Lake James and the Blue Ridge Parkway. There are 57 accessible miles of trail. Begin on the Blue Ridge Parkway at the North Carolina Mineral Museum, Milepost 331. Trailhead begins across NC 226 from the parking lot. Head north on trail parallel to Parkway. Cross Parkway and follow dirt/gravel road past Orchard at Altapass to McKinney Gap. Cross under Parkway and enter wooded trail to Heffner Gap parking lot on Parkway. Go to the web site for more information and access details.

LINVILLE GORGE

3400' • Varying Lengths • Strenuous
Eastern America's most scenic and rugged gorge. Take US 221/226 North to Linville Falls Community turning right onto NC 183. Travel to Wiseman's View Road, turn right to US Forest Service Visitor Center. Multiple trails. Trail maps available at visitor center.

WOODLAWN FITNESS TRAIL

1.25 miles • Easy to Moderate
Fitness trail consists of seven stations, two exercises per station, on a 1/4-mile jogging path. Additional one-mile loop surrounds exercise trail. Woodlawn Work Center is six miles north of Marion on US 221. Trail is behind picnic area on left.

WOODS MOUNTAIN

13 miles • Moderate to Strenuous
Outstanding views of Black Mountain range, Little Switzerland and Armstrong Creek watershed areas with views of Table Rock from section of North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Begins near Buck Creek Gap overlook at intersection of Blue Ridge Parkway and NC 80. Trail may be exited on US 221 at US Forest Service Area rest area near Woodlawn.

YOUNG'S RIDGE

7 miles • Easy to Moderate
Begins in Old Fort at picnic area. Incredible views of Kitsuma Peak at trail's end. US 70, west of Old Fort onto Mill Creek, turn right. Old Fort Picnic Area is several miles on left and marked by National Forest Sign.

Waterfall Hiking Trails

CATAWBA FALLS

888-233-6111 • www.mcdowellinc.org
Catawba Falls is about 70' high.

HICKORY BRANCH TRAIL FALLS

4 miles • Moderate
Views of 20' waterfall can be seen from this trail at US Forest Service campground, Curtis Creek Recreation Area. Approximately 2 miles east of Old Fort take US 70 to Curtis Creek Road, turn left. Go 4 miles to campground, trailhead is on edge of field to right of campground.

LINVILLE FALLS

Varying Lengths and Skill Levels
Most popular waterfall in the Blue Ridge with three tiered waterfall plunging into Linville Gorge. Exit Blue Ridge Parkway at Milepost 316.3. Falls Trail distance 1.6 miles, easy; Gorge Trail is 1.4 miles and is strenuous; Plunge Basin Trail is 1 mile round trip and is a moderate hike.

TOM'S CREEK FALLS

2 miles • Easy
7 miles north of Marion on US 221, turn left onto Huskins Branch Road, just before Woodlawn Motel. Go 1.5 miles and park on right at gravel lot before small bridge. Trailhead begins at lot. Trail will fork, follow left creek. Gentle falls in picturesque area.

Historic Sites

HISTORIC CARSON HOUSE

1805 Hwy 70 West, Marion
828-724-4948

Built in 1793 by Irish immigrant John Carson, the home has a rich history serving as the first county courthouse and stagecoach inn which received guests such as Davy Crockett

and Daniel Boone. The home is included in the NC Civil War Trails guide and the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. Open May 1 through October 31.

MOUNTAIN GATEWAY MUSEUM

102 Water Street, Old Fort
828-668-9259

Located on Mill Creek, this branch of the NC Museum of History interprets our past from the earliest inhabitants through the settlement period and into the twentieth century. The property includes a picnic area, amphitheater, two pioneer-era log cabins and the museum itself.

OLD FORT TRAIN STATION & MUSEUM

25 West Main Street, Old Fort
888-233-6111 • 828-668-4282

Constructed in 1881, the recently renovated depot includes the McDowell County Tourism Authority and Visitor Center, a railroad museum and the Old Fort Chamber of Commerce. Exhibits and artifacts include a map of the seven hand-dug tunnels and nine miles of track positioned between the town of Old Fort and the top of Swannanoa Gap and the Eastern Continental Divide. At one time in our nation's history, the longest tunnel at 1,800 feet was located here. Open Monday–Saturday, 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

JOSEPH P. McDOWELL HOUSE

Built in 1787 by a son of “Hunting John” McDowell, the founder of McDowell County. Joseph McDowell played a key role in the defeat of the British at Cowpens in January 1781, and served as a member of the North Carolina Constitutional Convention in 1788 and as a member of the 3rd US Congress. Located at the intersection of Hwy 70 Business and the Hwy 221/226 By-Pass in Marion. The home is not open to the public at this time.

ANDREWS' GEYSER

An Old Fort landmark, the geyser park celebrates its role during the peak of railroad history in Western North Carolina. Once part of a popular tourist resort, the geyser is now the centerpiece of a local park listed in the NC Civil War Trails guide. The sight notes

one of the last skirmishes of the Civil War that took place close by at the base of the Swannanoa Gap. Today, the park is operated by the town of Old Fort with picnic areas along picturesque Mill Creek.

OLD FORT ARROWHEAD

In the middle of downtown Old Fort stands a 30-foot granite arrowhead built to honor the peace made between the settlers and the Native Americans. This unusual monument was dedicated on July 27, 1930.



Horseback Riding

PUBLIC RIDING TRAILS

828-652-2144, US Forest Service
Horseback riding is permitted in many areas within the Pisgah National Forest lands. A few popular, undesignated areas in the Grandfather district include the Curtis Creek Recreational Area off US 70 near Old Fort, the Woodlawn Work Center on US 221 North, the Yellow Mountain Road near Altapass and the Kistler Memorial Hwy near Linville Gorge Wilderness Area. Two designated areas in the Toecane District include the Buncombe Horse Range Trail, a challenging trail for advanced riders near the Black Mountain Campground and Victor Fields off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Little Switzerland.

A-PATCHY STABLES

828-652-7977

www.horsere rentals.com

Trail rides, lessons, barrel racing, team roping. Overnight camping and grill facilities available. Located off NC 226 south of Marion.

SPRINGMAID MOUNTAIN

828-765-2353

www.leroysprings.com/springmaidmountain.html

Scheduled rides led by an experienced guide. Children under 9 years of age must be accompanied by parent/guardian. Located in Altapass near Little Switzerland.

Lodging

Bed & Breakfasts, Inns

ALPINE INN

828-765-5380

www.insidenc.com/alpineinn.htm

Rustic mountaintop inn at 3500'. Awesome views and picnic area.

BARN HOUSE INN

866-690-9182 • 828-738-4526

www.creekmont.biz

Rustic barn-style inn on nine acres with walking trails, creek and a quiet, country setting. Accepts pets. Year-round.

INN ON MILL CREEK

877-735-2964 • 828-668-1115

www.inn-on-mill-creek.com

Located between Old Fort and Black Mountain. Trout pond, orchards, hiking and biking trails. Accepts pets. Year-round.

THE INN AT BLUE RIDGE

828-756-7001

www.theinnatblueridge.com

Elegant rooms with fireplaces, private decks adjacent to spectacular golf course. Linville Falls and Blue Ridge Parkway are close by. Pets Accepted. Year-round.

Cabins & Cottages

BEAR DEN CABINS

828-765-2888 • www.bear-den.com

Creekside, furnished cabins and villas on Blue Ridge Parkway between Linville Falls and Little Switzerland.

Shopping

Shoppers can enjoy a variety of unique shops in the county.

- **Historic Downtown Marion** includes a bookstore, shops, antiques, auctions and local artisans.
- Works by local artists may be purchased at the **Appalachian Artisan Society Gallery** in Old Fort, the **Foothills Gallery** in Marion or the **McDowell County Arts Council** in Marion. Call for information at 828-652-8610.
- The quaint town of **Old Fort** offers antiques, railroad paraphernalia and museums. Evening auctions are held every other Saturday.
- Along the **Hwy 221/226 By-Pass** you will find an eclectic mix of antiques, pottery and “homegrown stands.” The **Business 221** route through Marion offers more traditional shopping with gift shops, craft shops and shopping centers.
- Traveling Hwy 70 between Marion and Old Fort, enjoy picking up everything from locally grown fruits and vegetables to shoes.
- The **Little Switzerland** community just off the Blue Ridge Parkway includes unique boutiques, children’s



shops, bookstore, arts and crafts, jewelry and more. Most shops are open between May through October. Call for details at 888-233-6111.

McDOWELL COUNTY

BEAR HAVEN CABIN

828-668-4831

www.catawbarivercamping.com
Riverside, authentically constructed log cabin. Sleeps 6 located in Old Fort at Catawba Falls Campground. Year-round.

BLUE RIDGE VACATION CABIN

800-842-7253 • 828-652-7757

Rustic A-frame in Pisgah National Forest. Fully equipped. Accepts pets.

COTTAGES AT SPRING HOUSE FARM

877-738-9798 or 828-738-9798

www.springhousefarm.com
Secluded 92-acre farm with private, distinctive log cabins. Main house on National Register of Historic Places. Year-round.

HEATHER GROVE CABINS

828-738-3573

www.heathergrovegold.com
Rustic furnished cabins alongside gold and gem panning operation. Year-round.

HEMLOCK RETREAT

704-489-1559 • 704-641-9500

www.tcc-inc.com/retreat
Mountainside 2BR/2BA rental cottage with deck and forest trails in Little Switzerland.

HIDDEN LAKE

828-460-8252

www.hiddenlakerentals.com
Gated community features log home rentals. Lakeside common area, fishing pier, swimming pool and picnic area. 10-acre stocked lake for paddleboat or kayaks. Year-round.

LAKE JAMES COTTAGE

828-724-9333

Idyllic cottage on Lake James. 3BR/2BA, with covered boat dock. The cottage was remodeled in 2004, convenient to Bear Cliff Marina. Year-round.

LAKE JAMES VACATION RETREATS

828-775-5253

www.lakejamesvacationretreats.com
Luxury townhomes on majestic Lake James. Amenities include access to 21' pontoon, tennis court, lakeside hiking trails inside a peaceful retreat in the Bear Cliff Community.

LINVILLE LODGE & COTTAGES

800-634-4421 or 828-765-2658

www.linvillefallsodge.com
Fully furnished cottages beside Spear's Restaurant in Linville Falls. Year-round.

LITTLE SWITZERLAND

VACATION RENTALS

866-766-0611 • 828-765-7111

www.rickgonsorrentals.com
Secluded mountaintop cabins with awe-inspiring views. Fireplaces, full kitchens, pool and tennis privileges.

LOG CABIN LODGING

828-756-4339

Fully furnished mountaintop cabins 5 miles to Blue Ridge Parkway.

MOUNTAIN PARADISE RENTALS

828-756-4085 • 828-652-9893

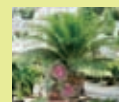
Furnished log cabin and house at Mountain Paradise Campground. Community pool and waterslide open in season. Year-round.

Pinwilz Gallery

Three stores in one location

The Appalachian Artisan Society Gallery, Pinwilz™ Beads & Jewelry Supply, and Butterfly Blends™ brand of SOY candles made on-site.

828-668-1070 • Pinwilz.com



Painter's Greenhouse

A “Seasonal Business”
open March 1 – July 1.

Flowering annuals, perennials, herbs, bedding, baskets, etc. Herb Festival 2nd weekend in April!

828-668-7225

PaintersGreenhouse.com

SARAH'S SONG CABIN

800-700-6765 ext. 65 • 828-659-2879
Secluded, wooded property close to Lake James.
Log cabin with all amenities. Year-round.

SKY ISLAND RETREAT

828-668-4928
www.skyislandretreat.com
Log cabins on 40 acres campground facility.
Traditional and primitive log cabins with
beautiful mountain views. Year-round.

TIMBERLINE PROPERTIES

828-766-8900 • www.timberlinenc.com
Private rental homes, cabins and cottages.
Some accept pets.

Motels, Lodges & Retreats**BIG LYNN LODGE**

800-654-5232 • 828-765-4257
www.biglynnlodge.com
Motor inn on mountain crest. Rustic,
contemporary rooms, cottages and condos
with restaurant on Blue Ridge Parkway.

BUDGET INN

828-652-7276
Small renovated motel in Marion. Year-round.

**COMFORT INN**

800-424-6423
www.comfortinn.com
Indoor pool, hot tub and meeting facilities.
Executive suites available. Year-round.

DAYS INN

828-659-2567 • www.daysinn.com
Located at the intersection of I-40 and
Exit 221 South. Meeting room, laundry,
outdoor pool and more. Year-round.

HAMPTON INN

800-426-7866 • 828-652-5100 I-40
www.hamptoninn.com
Suites with whirlpool tubs, conference rooms,
pool and hot tub. Located on Hwy 221
North, off I-40, Exit 85. Year-round.

LINVILLE FALLS LODGE & COTTAGES

800-634-4421 • 828-765-2658
www.linvillefallsllodge.com
Lodge rooms and fully furnished cottages beside
Spear's Restaurant in Linville Falls. Year-round.

MOUNTAIN VIEW MOTEL

800-304-1715 • 828-765-4233
www.mountainviewmotel.com
Comfortable lodging with restaurant open
year-round. Close to Blue Ridge Parkway.

ROUND KNOB LODGE

828-243-5762 • 828-669-4525 ext. 11
www.roundknoblodge.com
Historic railroad lodge on 11 acres with trout
and swimming ponds, in-ground pool, hiking
trails and gazebo. 6 BR/6 BA, 2 rock
fireplaces, LR and game room. Year-round.

Trainwatcher Café

Watch the trains in Old Fort at
Exit 73 off I-40. First class ticket to
dining. 5 Main
St., Old Fort.
8-3 M-Sat,
5-8 Fri, 11-2 Sun
828-668-7941

**SKYLINE VILLAGE INN
& CAVERN TAVERN**

828-994-0027
www.skylinevillageinn.com
1948 rock and wood structure with 16 rooms,
full service café and live entertainment. Close
to Blue Ridge Parkway and Little
Switzerland. Year-round.

SPORTSMAN INN

828-659-7525
Cable TV with HBO and outdoor swimming
pool. Year-round.
SUPER 8 MOTEL
828-659-7940
Convenient to I-40 at Exit 85. Accepts pets.
Year-round.

SWITZERLAND INN

800-654-4026 • 828-765-2153
www.switzerlandinn.com
Lodge rooms, views, private chalets and
cottages with complimentary breakfast.
Restaurant and bar. Close to Blue Ridge
Parkway.

**Lucky Strike Gold & Gem Mine**

Everything a prospector
needs is at the Lucky
Strike, no equipment
needed! Fun, food &
complete camping facilities on site.
828-738-4893
LuckyStrikeGoldAndGem.com