

a new state park at hickory nut gorge



If you were a peregrine falcon, an Indiana bat or even a green salamander, it is hard to imagine that you would find a better home than the steep cliffs, deep caves and rushing waterfalls of Hickory Nut Gorge. If you are a climber, hiker or birder, you are probably already familiar with this amazing place. With the help of a host of local partners committed to the protection of this rugged landscape, North Carolina's Division of Parks and Recreation is working to protect Hickory Nut Gorge, for its natural denizens as well as its human residents and visitors.



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the landscape

Hickory Nut Gorge is an ecological treasure of national significance located a mere 15 miles southeast of Asheville. Home to 37 rare plant species such as the white irisette and broadleaf coreopsis, the Gorge's caves provide habitat for rare salamanders and endangered bat species and its steep slopes and high peaks host an array of avian species, including the peregrine falcon and a number of neotropical migratory songbirds. The cliffs, rocky outcroppings and cascading falls make this ecological treasure equally notable for its recreational value. This combination of location, natural beauty and recreational opportunities makes Hickory Nut Gorge highly susceptible to the pressures of development and rapidly increasing land use. In addition, exotic species pose a serious threat to native plant populations.

the park

In coming months, the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation will permanently protect a portion of this exquisite landscape by creating a state park at Hickory Nut Gorge. As a state park, this new addition to the state's conservation land will be managed both to preserve the region's remarkable natural communities and to ensure that the public can freely enjoy the wildness and beauty of the area for generations to come. The park will not only provide a public retreat into the natural world for local residents, but will be another attractive destination for tourists who visit Chimney Rock, Lake Lure or the Biltmore Estate.

partners

Organizations working to protect this natural treasure have formed the Hickory Nut Gorge Planning Group. Members include: The Access Fund; Carolina Climbers Coalition; Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy; Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina; The Nature Conservancy; North Carolina Natural Heritage Program; North Carolina State Parks; Rutherford Outdoor Coalition; and the Upper Broad River Protection Program.



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