



For Immediate Release

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**145 ACRE HIGHLANDS OF ROAN LAND TRACT PRESERVED
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**
*THREE-YEAR PRESERVATION PROJECT COMPLETED BY THE SOUTHERN
APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY*

ASHEVILLE, N.C., Jan. 24, 2006— The purchase of a 145.5-acre natural area in Mitchell County by the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) is finally complete. The purchase is a part of SAHC's continued efforts to preserve the Highlands of Roan's scenery, unique ecosystems, recreational opportunities and water quality.

Preservation of the tract by SAHC means the natural habitat and watershed will be protected from development and pollution. Part of the 145-acre property lies within the nationally significant Roan Mountain Massif natural area, and it includes headwater streams that feed the nationally significant aquatic habitat of the North Toe River.

Conservation resource planning conducted by SAHC revealed the property includes seeps, rare spruce-fir forest and valuable habitat for endangered and threatened species, such as the Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel and the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

"This purchase is another important step in SAHC's efforts to preserve what is special about the Highlands of Roan," said David Ray, SAHC lands program director. "Now future generations will be able to experience one of the crown jewels of the Southern Appalachians with the same sense of enjoyment and wonder that we have today."

The project was made possible by funding from the North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP), a generous donation by Fred and Alice Stanback and the support of SAHC members.

EEP was created by N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, N.C. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and it is the state's highly successful initiative to restore, enhance and protect streams, wetlands and their natural functions.

The Highlands of Roan was identified as SAHC's highest priority at its inception in 1974. Since then, the organization has consistently reached out to owners of important lands in the area and preserved thousands of acres.

In 2003, the Bruchon family contacted SAHC about their interest in the property. Following months of negotiations, the parties decided SAHC would acquire the tract in a phased purchase over three years.

****PHOTOS OF THE PRESERVED LAND TRACT AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST****



THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

North Carolina
LAND TRUSTS
Saving the Places You Love

North Carolina Land Trusts — Saving the Places You Love

The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is one of 23 North Carolina land trusts. North Carolina's land trusts preserve land and water resources to safeguard your way of life. We work in local communities to ensure that critical lands are protected for recreation, tourism and working farms.

Founded in 1974, SAHC is one of the longest operating land trusts in the southern Appalachians. Our mission is to protect the world's oldest mountains for the benefit of present and future generations. To this end, our volunteer-based organization works with individuals and local communities to identify, preserve and manage the region's important lands.

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