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Comments:

Big Ivy Wilderness

Dear Allen Nicholas, Matt McCombs, Michelle Aldridge, and the Forest Service Planning Team,

I am writing to ask you to designate ALL of Big Ivy:

1. Designate Big Ivy's trail-less, high-elevation forests as wilderness as recommended by the Buncombe County Board of commissioners.
2. Designate Big Ivy's trail network and the old-growth forests of Coxcomb Mountain and Snowball Mountain as backcountry.

This wilderness area is critical to the economic health and environmental health of the whole region. As one of the most photographed and viewed areas on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Big Ivy contributes to the billion dollar plus outdoor industry western North Carolina depends on. The shop owners, restaurant wait staff, motel owners, and so many more need tourism to survive. Though Asheville itself is a booming town, the region still suffers from low incomes and low wages. Leaving such a valuable natural resource as Big Ivy unprotected will have a direct impact on the tourist industry upon which so many people depend.

Clean water is another huge economic driver as our whole region boasts numerous breweries, wineries, cideries, and agriculture. These industries have brought an economic health that has reached beyond the "metro" areas of Asheville and Hendersonville by employing hundreds, or thousands, of locals and again encouraging and bolstering the tourist trade.

Big Ivy is also critical to our national heritage as a part of our historic connection to the land. Protecting all of Big Ivy means we're protecting the rugged terrain that produced some of our most storied characters such as Daniel Boone.

Designating ALL of Big Ivy as a wilderness and backcountry region is the right thing to do. All Americans benefit from healthy land. All Americans have a right to enjoy the wilderness as it has always been. All Americans have a right to enjoy the heritage of the Southern Appalachians.

Your support of all of Big Ivy as a wilderness and backcountry region is very graciously appreciated.

Thank you from the core of my, and others', soul,

Patty Cunningham-Woolf

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Patty Woolf, Broker, REALTOR

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