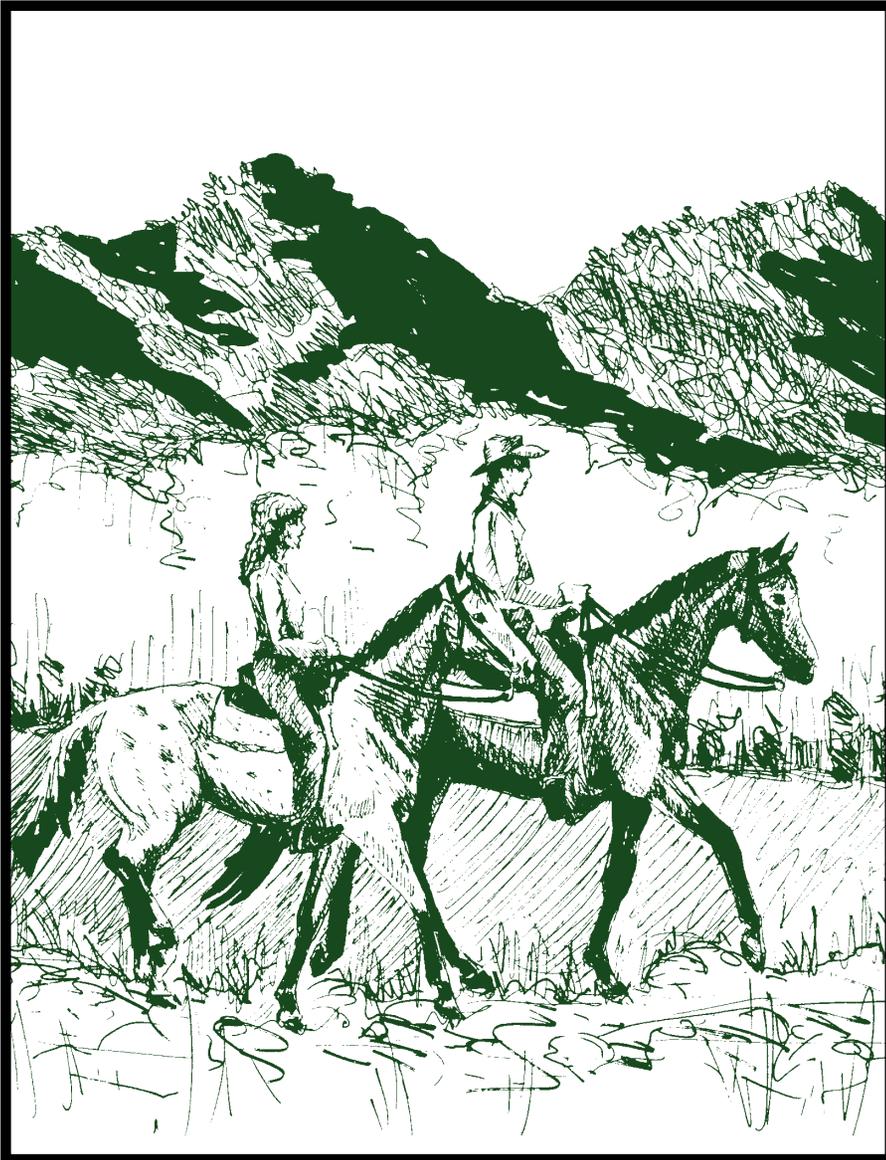




## FOREST TRAILS



## HORSE TRAILS

National Forests in North Carolina



## WHERE YOU CAN RIDE



When you're mounted on a horse, the journey through a national forest can offer better views from the saddle, the ability to go longer distances, and varieties of motion-walk, trot, lope, or gallop. The national forests offer a variety of riding experiences for all levels of riders. Look for trails signed with the horse-use symbol. If the trail is unsigned or a red slash is across the horse symbol, the trail is for hiking only. Open and gated Forest Service roads are open for horse-back riding, unless signed closed to this use.

This brochure gives general information about riding experiences in some forest areas. For maps and more information, contact ranger districts. Please see back page for district addresses and phone numbers.

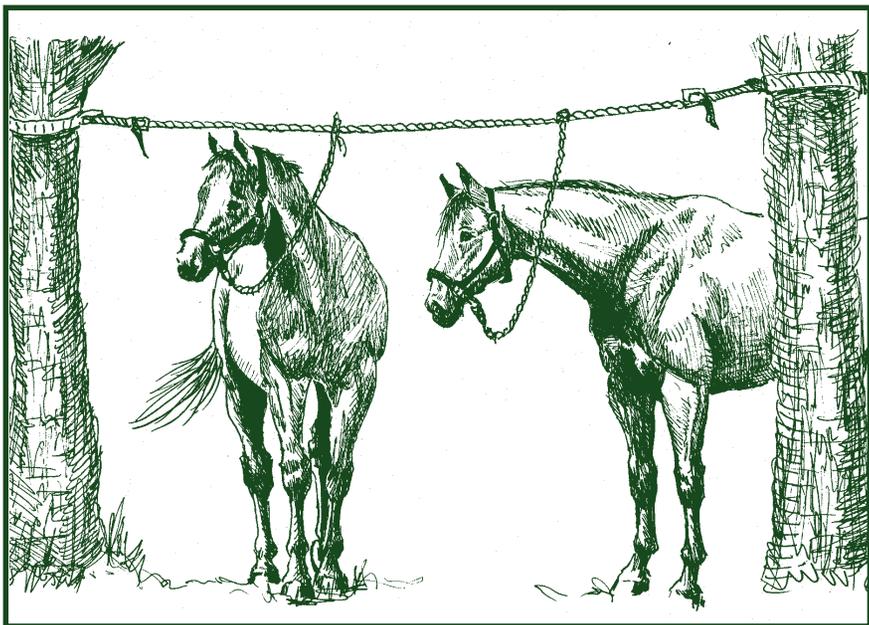


## TREAD LIGHTLY

- Obey trail and road closures.
- Stay on the trail. Taking shortcuts causes erosion or skirting wet areas widen trails.
- Travel in small groups, preferably six or less.
- Avoid tying horses to trees, even temporarily. Use a highline.
- Plan your trip to avoid spring thaw and extended wet weather.
- Pack it in. Pack it out.

## COURTESY ON THE TRAIL

- Communicate with other trail users, and tell them how to safely pass your horse.
- Hikers and mountain bikers should yield to horses, unless riders have a better place to pull off.



Highline your horse.

## CAMPING TIPS

- Use a highline with tree-saver straps to tether your horse. It prevents stock from trampling roots and chewing bark.
- Highline your horse 100 feet away from streams, if possible. Also, highline horses away from trails and from campsites. These measures help keep water clean and trails and campsites clear of horse manure.
- Pack some grain, since grazing is limited. Be certain that the feed is weed-free to prevent noxious plants from spreading.
- Break up and scatter manure and fill in pawed holes when breaking camp.
- Horses are not permitted in developed campgrounds and picnic areas. Primitive camping with horses is available in some areas. These areas are noted on the following trail list.

## SOUTH TOE RIVER AREA

### APPALACHIAN RANGER DISTRICT

**Features:** On their way to South Toe River, numerous streams flow down steep slopes of the Black Mountains, the highest range in eastern America. Evergreen forests of spruce and fir crown the high peaks. This area provides about 10 miles of easy to moderate riding on gated forest roads (FRs) along FR 472. Advanced riders can test their skills on the physically challenging Buncombe Horse Range Trail.

**Access:** From Burnsville, take U.S. 19E and head south on NC 80. Turn right onto FR 472 at Mt. Mitchell Golf Course. Follow this road past Black Mountain Campground, where parking is available in pulloffs along the road. Parking for the Buncombe Horse Range Trail is on FR 472, about 4 miles past the campground.

**Camping:** Primitive camping is allowed only at signed sites along FR 472, South Toe River Road. No facilities are provided. Streams are nearby.

**Maps:** South Toe River Trail Map.

### Key for Trail Difficulty

- Easiest    ■ More Difficult    ◆ Most Difficult

### AREA TRAILS

- ◆ **Buncombe Horse Range** ..... 17.5 miles.  
High elevation, steep sections, requires vehicle shuttle.
- **Camp Alice** ..... 2 miles.  
No horses allowed in Mt. Mitchell State Park.

## VICTOR FIELDS

### APPALACHIAN RANGER DISTRICT

**Features:** Victor Fields is located on Sevenmile Ridge adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway in Yancey County. The area's features are gentle ridgetops, hardwood forests, open fields, and some distant views of the Black Mountains. Open and closed roads offer 12 miles of easy to moderate riding.

**Access:** From the intersection of NC 80, head north on Blue Ridge Parkway about 2 miles and turn left onto unsigned gravel road, FR 5511. Parking is available in pulloffs along this road.

**Camping:** Camp in pulloffs along FR 5511. No facilities are offered.

**Maps:** Pisgah National Forest, includes Grandfather, Toecane, and French Broad Districts; USDA Forest Service quad–Celo.

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## COLEMAN BOUNDARY

### APPALACHIAN RANGER DISTRICT

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**Features:** Also known as Big Ivy, Coleman Boundary is a scenic high elevation area on the northwestern slopes of the Great Craggy Mountains below the Blue Ridge Parkway in Buncombe County. This area offers 16 miles of easy to challenging loop-riding opportunities on FRs 74 and 5548 and short connecting trails. Some routes wind in and out of coves; others provide long-range vistas.

**Access:** From Asheville, take U.S. 19/23 north and turn east onto NC 197 at Barnardsville Exit. From Barnardsville, turn right onto State Road (SR) 2173 and go 5 miles to FR 74 at forest boundary. Park in pulloffs.

**Camping:** Primitive camping is available in pulloffs along FR 74. No facilities are provided.

**Map:** Pisgah National Forest, includes Grandfather, Toecane, and French Broad Districts. Forest Service quads–Barnardsville, Mt. Mitchell, and Montreat.

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## AREA TRAILS

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- **Bear Pen** ..... 1.4 miles.  
Old road, sidehill, stream crossings.
- **Corner Rock** ..... 1.4 miles.  
Old road, multiple switchbacks.
- **Elk Pen** ..... 1.9 miles.  
Streamside; switchbacks.
- **Hensley Fields** ..... 1.9 miles.  
Old road, sidehill, steep sections.
- **Perkins** ..... 1.1 miles.  
Old road, climbs.
- **Stair Creek** ..... 1.1 miles.  
Old road, streamside, switchbacks.
- **Walker Creek** ..... 1.6 miles.  
Old road; streamside; switchbacks.

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## FLATTOP MOUNTAIN AREA

### APPALACHIAN RANGER DISTRICT

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**Features:** Flattop Mountain is a prominent mountain range that separates the Nolichucky River and Big Creek drainages near the NC/TN State line. The young forest shows signs of recent forest management. About 10 miles of riding is available on FR 278 that skirts the main ridgetop. This road is open to vehicles most of the year, so watch for traffic. Openings along the road provide some views. Horses are prohibited on the Appalachian Trail and other trails in the area.

**Access:** FR 278 begins at Spivey Gap on U.S. 19W near the NC/TN line or at the end of SR 1415, a dirt road off of U.S. 19W. From Burnsville, go west on U.S. 19E and north on U.S. 19W. Park in pulloff on U.S. 19W across from FR 278 or in pulloff at forest boundary on SR 1415.

**Camping:** Primitive campsites are available at the end of FR 1451 and along FR 278, but no facilities are offered.

**Map:** Pisgah National Forest, includes Grandfather, Toecane, and French Broad Districts. Forest Service quads–Chestoa and Hunt Dale.

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## SOUTH MILLS RIVER AREA

### PISGAH RANGER DISTRICT

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**Features:** Very popular backcountry area for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. Numerous trails offer many opportunities for loop rides. Most trails follow historic logging roads and railroad grades alongside streams through hardwood forests.

**Access:** Most trails connect to the South Mills River Trail, which begins at the end of FR 476 and at Turkey Pen Gap Trailhead. From U.S. 276, turn onto FR 1206 (Yellow Gap Road) near Pink Beds Picnic Area. Turn right onto FR 476 and go about 0.7 mile and park in roadside campsite on right. Trailers should not be beyond this point as there is no turnaround space. Turkey Pen Trailhead is at the end of FR 297 off NC 280, northeast of Brevard. Avoid this crowded trailhead on weekends, since there's no turn-around space for horse trailers when parking area is full.

**Camping:** Some roadside campsites can accommodate horse trailers on FRs 1206 and 476. No facilities are available.

**Map:** Pisgah District Trail Map.

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## AREA TRAILS

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- ◆ **South Mills River** .....12 miles.  
13 tricky river crossings, no bridges.
- **Squirrel Gap** .....7.5 miles.  
Sidehill through several gaps, closed to horses between Laurel Creek and Horse Cove Gap.
- **Horse Cove Gap** .....1.2 miles.  
Connector, joins long loops.
- **Cantrell Creek** .....1.9 miles.  
Streamside, wooded, closed to horses between Horse Cove Gap and Squirrel Gap Trails.
- **Bradley Creek** ..... 5.1 miles.  
Many stream crossings, no bridges, fields.
- **Laurel Creek** .....1.8 miles.  
Streamside, hardwood forest, wet areas.
- **Mullinax** .....1.2 miles.  
Old logging road, loop connector.
- **Riverside** ..... 4 miles.  
River crossing, easy grade.

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## NORTH MILLS RIVER AREA

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### PISGAH RANGER DISTRICT

**Features:** Trails combined with gated forest roads provide multiple loop-riding opportunities. Routes are marked with signs and different colored blazes. Trails are shared with hikers and mountain bikers.

**Access:** Area is located southwest of Asheville off NC 191/280. All trails begin from Trace Ridge Trailhead. To reach trailhead, follow FR 5000 (Wash Creek Road) about 1.5 miles north from North Mills River Campground. Turn left across low concrete bridge and continue 0.5 mile to parking area. Parking is available for several horse trailers. Trailhead may be crowded on weekends.

**Camping:** Two primitive campsites can accommodate horse trailers on FR 5000 (Wash Creek Road), but no facilities are provided.

**Map:** Pisgah District Trail Map.

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## AREA TRAILS

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- **Big Creek** .....4.9 miles  
Streamside, creek crossings, horses only to Bee Branch.  
**North Mills River...**See next page

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## North Mills River continued

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- **Fletcher Creek** .... 2.4 miles.  
Easy grades; streamside; wildlife fields.
- **Middle Fork** ..... 1.8 miles.  
Old railroad grade; wildlife fields.
- **Spencer Branch** .....2.3 miles.  
Streamside; northern end steep.
- **Trace Ridge** ..... 3.1 miles.  
Ridgetop; fall and winter views.

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## HARMON DEN AREA

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### APPALACHIAN RANGER DISTRICT

**Features:** Cold Springs Creek flows through dense woods and grassy fields on its way to the Pigeon River. The forest shows hints of its past history—farming, logging, narrow gauge railroads, settlements, and signs of recent forest management. The grassy ridges of Max Patch Mountain near the Tennessee State line crown the area. Trails combine with Forest Service roads to provide loop riding opportunities. Watch for vehicles on open roads.

**Access:** Take Harmon Den Exit off I-40 near NC/TN State line. Head northeast on FR 148 (Cold Springs Road) about 3 miles to Harmon Den parking area on left. Parking for trailers is also available at lower junction of FRs 148 and 3526; Robert Gap Trailhead at junction of FR 148 and SR 1182; and Cherry Ridge Trailhead on SR 1182; All trailheads are about 7 miles from each other.

**Camping:** Along FR 148, primitive roadside camping is offered. No camping is allowed at Harmon Den parking area.

**Trail Map:** Harmon Den Trail Map.

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## AREA TRAILS

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- **Buckeye Ridge** ..... 5.4 miles.  
Grassy fields, panoramic views, wooded.
- ◆ **Cherry Creek** ..... 1.6 miles.  
Steep, rock obstacles, tight switchbacks.
- ◆ **Cherry Ridge** ..... 1.1 miles.  
Steep, connects Harmon Den and Max Patch.
- **Cold Springs** ..... 3.6 miles.  
Streamside, wooded, some winter views.
- **Robert Gap** ..... 2.5 miles.  
Old logging roads, wooded, some winter views.

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## FIRES CREEK AREA

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### TUSQUITEE RANGER DISTRICT

**Features:** This large remote basin is outlined by a horseshoe-shaped rim of densely forested mountains rising to over 5,000 feet. Fires Creek drains the basin and the 5,240-foot Tusquitee Bald crowns its rugged steep terrain. Most trails connect to the Rim Trail, which follows the ridgeline around the basin. Some Rim Trail sections are for hiking only.

**Access:** The area is about 10 miles east of Murphy, off U.S. 64. Turn left onto SR 1301; at river crossing, turn right onto SR 1300 and follow it to SR 1344. Turn left and proceed to FR 340, Fires Creek Road, at the national forest boundary. Parking for horse trailers is available at the hunters camp on the left past the boundary and at roadside pulloffs along FR 340. Additional parking is available across from the Bristol Horse Camp.

**Camping:** Bristol Fields Horse Campground on FR 340 provides primitive camping with toilet facilities, potable water, tables, fire rings, and horse stalls.

**Maps:** Forest Service quads—Andrews, Topton, Peachtree, and Hayesville.

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### AREA TRAILS

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- ◆ **Rim Trail** ..... 13.7 miles.  
High elevation, remote, steep sections.
- **Huskins Branch** ..... 1.5 miles.  
Old road up ridgeline.
- ◆ **Little Fires Creek** ..... 1.3 miles.  
Old road; steamside; steep sections.
- ◆ **Rockhouse Creek** ..... 2.3 miles.  
Old road; steamside.
- **Phillips Ridge** ..... 4.4 miles.  
Old road.
- ◆ **Far Bald Springs** ..... 1.9 miles.  
Streamside, ends at Tusquitee Bald.



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## STANDING INDIAN AREA

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### WAYAH RANGER DISTRICT

**Features:** Standing Indian Basin is a horseshoe shaped drainage formed by the Nantahala and Blue Ridge Mountains. Bisecting the drainage is the Nantahala River, born amid the basin's high peaks. The forest is managed to provide a variety of recreation opportunities, diverse wildlife habitats, and timber products. Trails combine with roads to offer a variety of riding opportunities. Horse trails are marked with orange blazes.

**Access:** From Franklin, head west on U.S. 64 and turn left, heading south onto old U.S. 64. Go about 2 miles and turn right onto FR 67. Follow this road past the entrance to the Standing Indian Campground. Parking is available in pull-offs along this road.

**Camping:** Hurricane Horse Camp provides primitive camping in a grassy field. The camp is located on FR 76, about 3 miles south of the entrance to Standing Indian Campground. Facilities include a pit toilet, 25 stalls, and a watering trough. Horses must be kept in stalls.

**Maps:** Southern Nantahala Wilderness and Standing Indian Basin.

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### AREA TRAILS

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- **Big Indian Loop** ..... 8 miles.  
Crosses river, parallels Big Indian Creek.
- **Blackwell Gap Loop** ..... 4.2 miles.  
Follows gravel or grassy logging roads.
- **Hurricane Creek Loop** ..... 4 miles.  
Follows gravel or grassy logging roads.
- **Thomas Branch Loop** ..... 3.5 miles.  
Grassy road, wooded.

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# BADIN LAKE AREA

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## UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST

**Features:** The Badin Lake Area includes the southern end of the Uwharrie Mountains bordered by the Uwharrie River, Yadkin River and Badin Lake. Small meandering streams flow through a dense hardwood forest on rocky mountainous terrain. Horses currently use forest roads and the 20 miles of off-highway-vehicle (OHV) trails for a variety of easy to moderate riding opportunities. Be alert for vehicles when riding these routes. Horse trails are being planned for the area.

**Access:** From Troy, head north on NC 109, turn west (left) onto Mullinix Road. Proceed about 1.5 miles. The horse camp is about .25 mile on the right after the pavement becomes gravel.

**Camping:** Badin Lake Horse Camp provides primitive camping in a grassy field. Facilities include hitching posts with nearby stream.

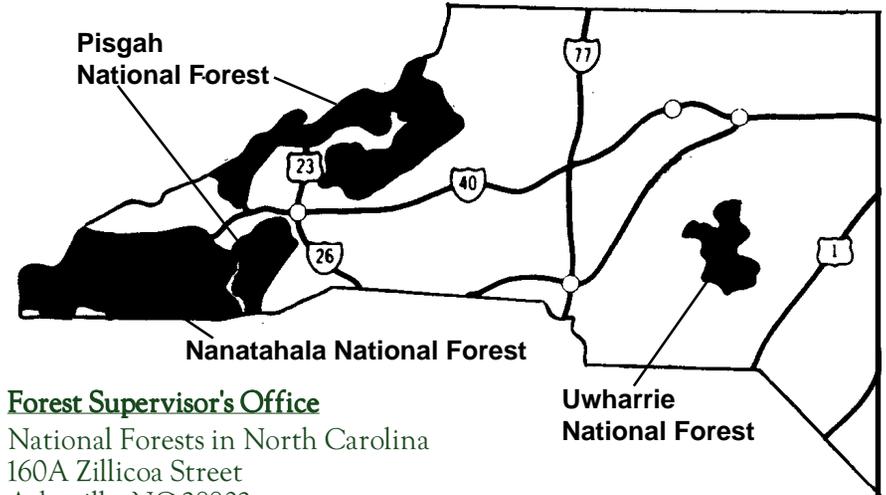
**Maps:** Uwharrie National Forest. Forest Service quad-Badin.

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# WHERE CAN YOU FIND US?



### Forest Supervisor's Office

National Forests in North Carolina  
160A Zillicoa Street  
Asheville, NC 28802  
(828) 257-4200  
(Take U.S. 19/23, UNCA exit  
onto Broadway to Highland Park.)

### French Broad District

P.O. Box 128  
Hot Springs, NC 28743  
(828) 622-3202  
(On U.S. 25/70 in Hot Springs.)

### Pisgah District

1001 Pisgah Highway  
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768  
(828) 877-3350  
(On U.S. 276 north of Brevard.)

### Toecane District

P.O. Box 128  
Burnsville, NC 28714  
(828) 682-6146  
(On U.S. 19-E bypass in Burnsville.)

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