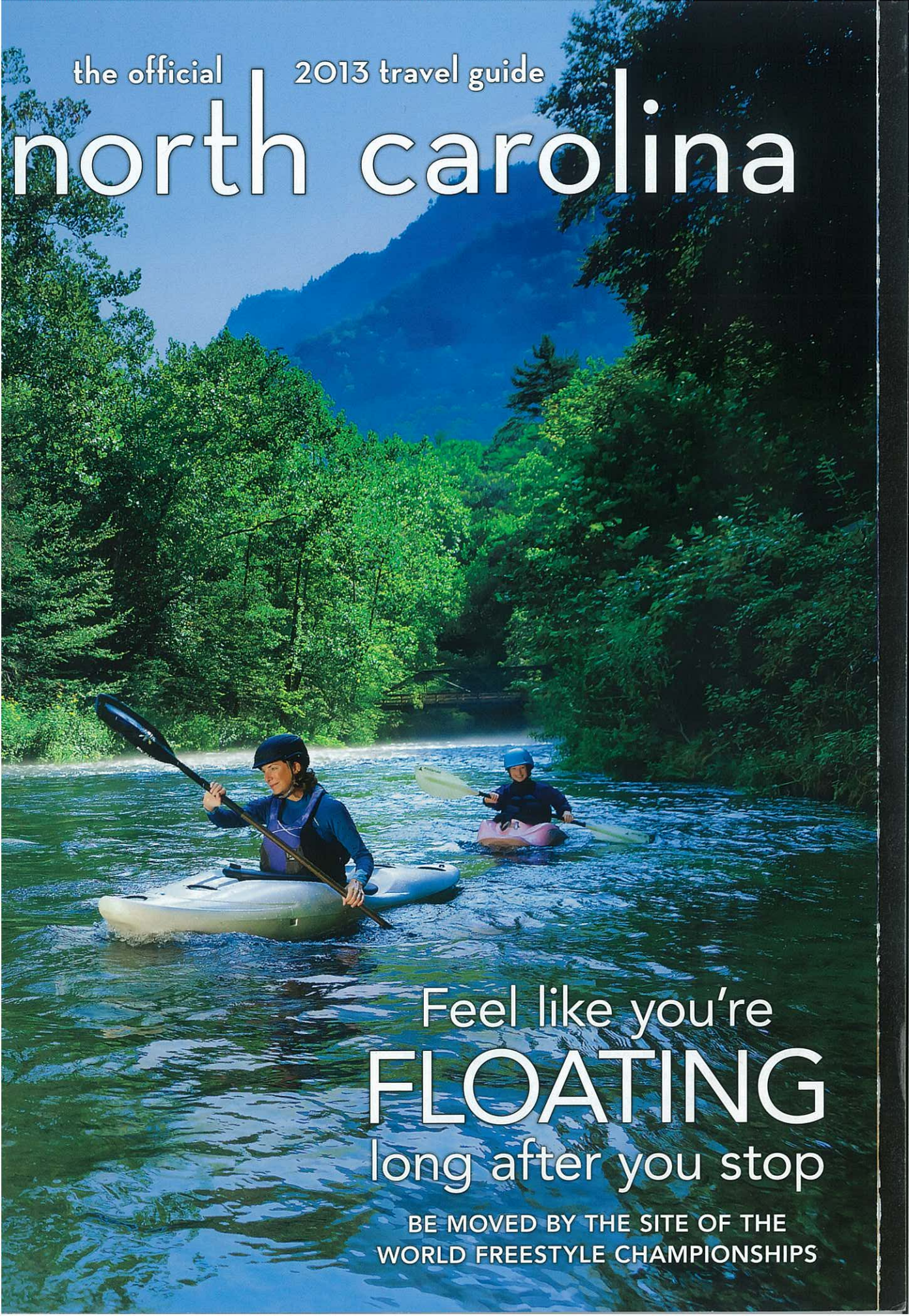


the official 2013 travel guide

north carolina



Feel like you're
FLOATING
long after you stop

BE MOVED BY THE SITE OF THE
WORLD FREESTYLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

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Equipment required?
Your five senses will do just fine.

A Blue Ridge Parkway

Slow down and enjoy the drive on America's premier scenic byway. North Carolina's portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway stretches **252 smooth, curvy miles** along high-elevation crests with terrific views, such as this view off the Linn Cove Viaduct. Plan your journey around stops to hike nature trails, explore small towns, experience historic sites, visit art galleries, spread picnics and gaze from roadside overlooks.



B

B Weymouth Woods-Sandhills Nature Preserve

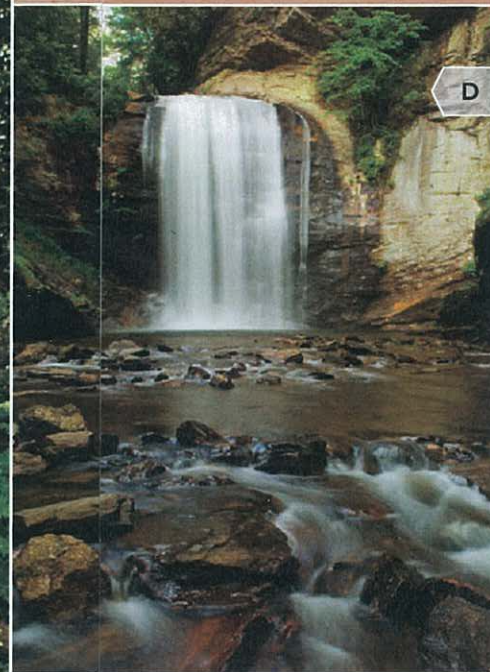
North Carolina's first designated natural area celebrates 50 years in 2013. Set among golf courses, peach orchards and horse farms in the Sandhills area, the 900-acre Weymouth Woods-Sandhills Nature Preserve harbors tall longleaf pines, endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers, rare bog spicebush and other wildlife. Walk sandy paths to see the Piedmont in its most natural state.



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C



D



E



F

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The beauty of it all makes it easy to stay awhile.

C Wild Horses

Watch free-range horses graze among dunes and gallop on beaches around Corolla on the northern Outer Banks, Shackleford Banks and Ocracoke. The smallest mustangs, called Banker Horses, most likely descend from mustangs left on these remote islands by Spanish explorers five centuries ago. Keep your distance; they may live close to people, but they're essentially wild animals.

D Looking Glass Falls

Of North Carolina's hundreds of waterfalls, Looking Glass Falls beside US 276 north of Brevard might be the most visited and photographed. While others require hikes to reach, this thundering 60-foot drop allows easy access, even by wheelchairs. Swim in the pool at the base, but watch out for slippery rocks.

E Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

Established 10 years ago by an act of Congress, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area includes the Cherokee Qualla Boundary and 25 mountainous counties in western North Carolina. The designation promotes local history, crafts, agriculture, music, parks, forests, towns, waterfalls, hiking trails, scenic byways, museums and other treasures.

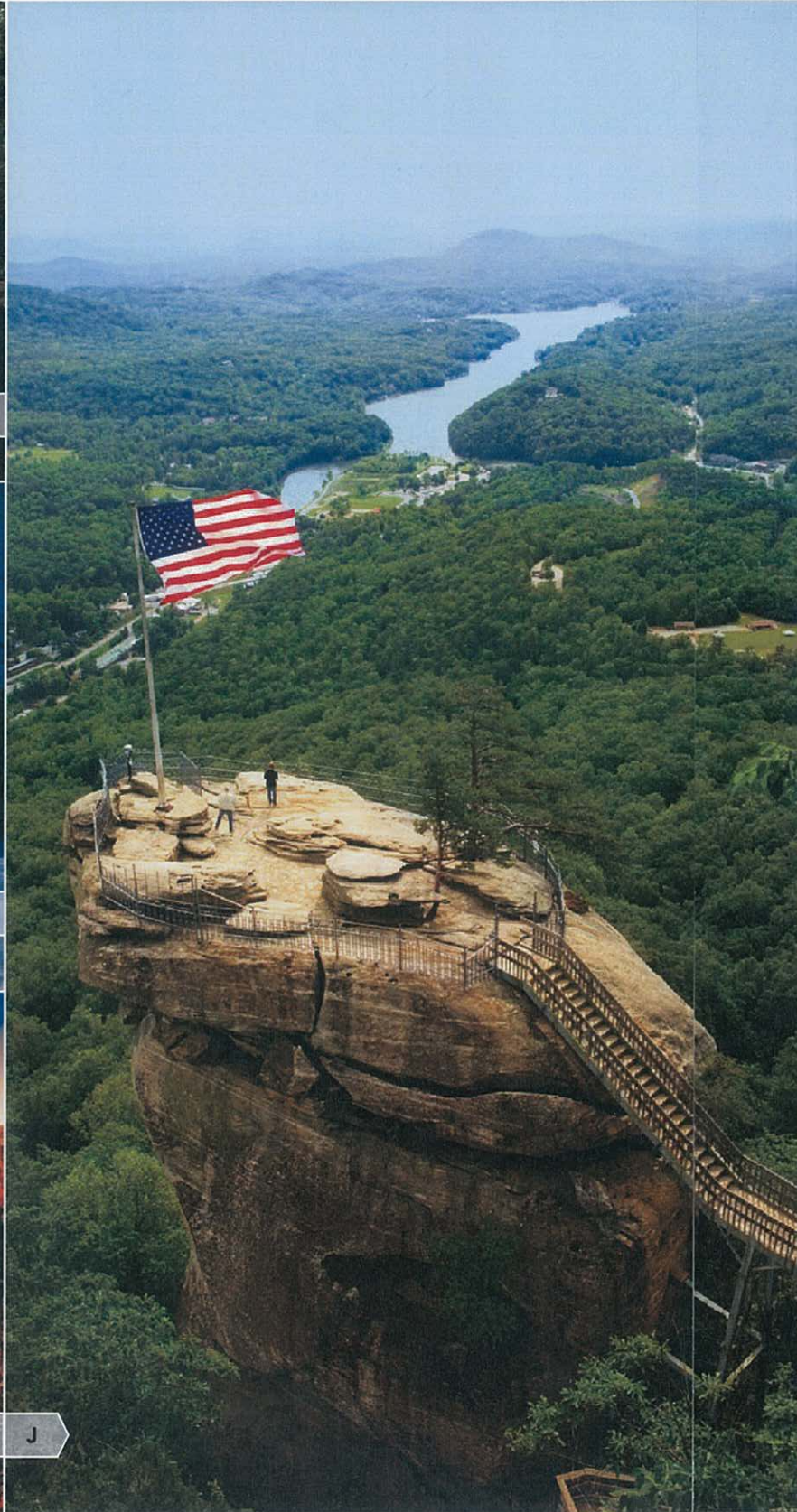


THE QUALLA ARTS & CRAFTS MUTUAL IS THE NATION'S OLDEST NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE WITH AN ARRAY OF HANDMADE OBJECTS FOR SALE.

F Jockey's Ridge

Jockey's Ridge State Park in Nags Head holds the East Coast's tallest sand dunes. The sprawling patch of mostly quartz particles, constantly reshaped by sea winds, includes bare peaks, maritime thickets and an estuary. Come here for hang gliding, sand boarding, kite flying, boardwalk strolling and nature watching, then stay to see the beautiful sunsets.

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G Linville Gorge

Linville Gorge Wilderness, called "The Grand Canyon of North Carolina," offers hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, bird watching, nature photography and other outdoor opportunities to those willing to leave behind the trappings of civilization. Find it flanking the Linville River in the Pisgah National Forest near the town of Linville Falls.

H Outer Banks

A unique natural phenomenon, the Outer Banks span 200 miles of narrow barrier islands separating the Atlantic Ocean and a series of sounds. The fragile archipelago holds wide beaches, high dunes, towering lighthouses, bustling marinas, wildlife refuges, historic sites recalling colonization and the advent of aviation, every kind of water sport and all manner of dining and lodging.

I Shadow of the Bear

Hey, that does look like a bear! Shortly after 5:30 on sunny evenings in late October and early November (and again for a few weeks beginning mid-February), **Whiteside Mountain** casts a remarkably bearlike shadow on fall foliage in the valley below. See it best from the Rhodes Big View Overlook on US 64 between Cashiers and Highlands. Camera required. Please be aware of busy highway traffic when parking, viewing and leaving the site.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE OF NORTH CAROLINA'S NATURAL SCENIC BEAUTY ON FACEBOOK.](#)



THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT MITCHELL IS EASILY REACHED BY A ROAD OFF THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY, THEN A HIKE ALONG A 980-FOOT TRAIL.

J Chimney Rock

Chimney Rock, a prominent 315-foot stone spire topped by an American flag, overlooks broad Hickory Nut Gorge. A new, open-air stairway leads to the top, and a modernized elevator inside the mountain provides quick access to the summit area. The 26-story elevator is the only one of its kind in a Southeastern park.

K Mount Mitchell

Rising 6,684 feet and covered with red spruce, Mount Mitchell – the **highest point in the eastern United States** – often hides among swirling clouds. On clear days, though, you can see forever. Drive to the top or pedal there like bicyclists do during May's Assault on Mount Mitchell ride. Watch for flying squirrels, white-tailed deer, black bear, gray fox and other residents of Mount Mitchell State Park.

