

## NO-TRACE CAMPING

### HOW DO YOU RATE AS A NO-TRACE CAMPER?

Your challenge is to leave no evidence of your visit so that the next person can enjoy a natural scene. Tread lightly so that nature can endure and replenish.

Read the list of recommended No-Trace Camping procedures. Check those you actually use. If you check 20-30, you are a first rate No-Trace camper. 20-24, your coming right along; below 20, you may be doing more damage to your favorite backcountry spots than they can stand.

When I camp in the backcountry I:

- Plan ahead to avoid impact
  - Avoid holidays and weekends
  - Limit group size (6 or less optimum)
  - Repackage food to reduce containers
  - Take along litter bag to carry out all refuse
  - Carry a stove and food ready for little cooking
  - Buy only gear in subalpine forest colors
  - Check at the Ranger Station for low use areas

- Travel to avoid impact
  - Travel quietly
  - Walk single file in center of trail
  - Stay on mud trail even if wet
  - Never shortcut switchbacks
  - Look at and photograph, never pick or collect
  - Avoid riparian areas
  - Never discard cigarette butts, candy or gum wrappers
  - Walk softly; don't kick up dirt and stones or trample vegetation

- Make No-Trace camp
  - Select a site invisible from the trail and any other camping parties
  - Disperse tent 25 feet from natural water sources and away from "beauty spots"
  - Avoid using existing campsites that are obviously over camped
  - Never cut standing trees and vegetation or pull up plants
  - Never dig, dig holes or trenches
  - Wear light weight, soft sole shoes around camp
  - Use bear resistant canisters or only small fires in safe places
  - Never wash dirty dishes, clothes, or myself directly in stream or spring
  - Use biodegradable soap and dispose of waste water at least 100 feet away from water supply
  - If any human waste six inches deep at least 100 feet from water
  - Stay as quiet as possible. Leave radios and tape players at home
  - Leave my dogs at home

- Leave a No-Trace campsite
  - Pack away every trace of litter
  - Down my garbage and erase all evidence of it
  - Replace and scatter twigs and leaves cleared for a sleeping area
  - Pack out all garbage
  - Check for any evidence of my stay



# Trail Descriptions

**Trail # 237-Steel's Creek**  
Distance 4 miles  
Elevation at Road # 496 2500'  
Elevation at N.C. 181 1400'  
Hiking Time 5 hours

This trail begins on New Gingerate Road and follows an old logging road down to Steel's Creek, winding through fern and rhododendron. The trail stays with the stream, crossing back and forth several times until it links up with Steel's Creek Road (#228). The trail follows this trail to the lower Steel's Creek Trail, then crosses the stream several more times and comes out on N.C. 181 0.3 mile north of the National Forest boundary.

There are many camping spots available along the trail. The trout fishing is excellent in Steel's Creek. Wildlife openings along the trail provide many opportunities for the hiker to observe deer, hawks, and grouse.

A longer hike can be made in this area by connecting Steel's Creek Trail with Trail #268: hike along Road #496 to N.C. 181, going south on 181 for several hundred feet to Trail #268 on the left side of the road.

**Trail # 258-Wilson Creek**  
Distance 8 miles  
Elevation at Road # 45 2400 feet  
Elevation at Road # 192 2900 feet  
Hiking Time 4 hours

This trail follows the upper section of Wilson Creek, one of the best trout streams in North Carolina.

The trail crosses Wilson Creek several times, requiring some wading on the hiker's part. About one mile from its upper end the trail forks. The left fork (Trail # 258A) follows Andrews Creek to Road # 192.

**Trail # 260-Harper Creek**  
Distance 5 miles  
Elevation at N.C. 1328 1400'  
Elevation at Road # 58 2400'  
Hiking Time 4 hours

From N.C.1328 this trail winds up and down to Harper Creek. About

one-half mile upstream from this point is Harper Falls. The trail continues to follow Harper Creek to the top of South Harper Creek Falls, crossing the stream several times.

This trail begins at the site of the old Game Warden station on the Roseboro community on N.C. 80. It climbs to the crest of Timber Ridge and follows the ridge to the top of Bee Mountain. Here the trail becomes very steep, descending to Lost Cove Creek. For the next two and one-half miles the trail follows an excellent trophy-trout stream. The trail then becomes very steep as it crosses the top of Timber Ridge and drops to Gragg Prong Creek. There are several sets of scenic falls along this stream. The trail follows Gragg Prong Creek upstream for one and one-half miles back to the point of origin. This loop trail provides a fairly strenuous one-day hike.

**Trail # 262-Lost Cove**  
Distance at N.C. 80 7.5 miles  
Elevation at N.C. 181 2100'  
Hiking Time 5 hours

This trail begins at the site of the old Game Warden station on the Roseboro community on N.C. 80. It climbs to the crest of Timber Ridge and follows the ridge to the top of Bee Mountain. Here the trail becomes very steep, descending to Lost Cove Creek. For the next two and one-half miles the trail follows an excellent trophy-trout stream. The trail then becomes very steep as it crosses the top of Timber Ridge and drops to Gragg Prong Creek. There are several sets of scenic falls along this stream. The trail follows Gragg Prong Creek upstream for one and one-half miles back to the point of origin. This loop trail provides a fairly strenuous one-day hike.

**Trail # 263-Hunt Fish Falls**  
Distance at Road #44 0.7 mile  
Elevation at Road #44 2400'  
Elevation at Trail # 262 1800'  
Hiking Time 30 minutes

This steep trail follows several switchbacks as it descends to Lost Cove Creek. It provides access to Lost Cove Creek Trail, which it intersects at Hunt Fish Falls. Large trout may be seen in the pool below the falls.

**Trail # 266-North Harper Creek**  
Distance 4.5 miles  
Elevation at Road # 58 3300'  
Elevation at Trail # 260 1800'  
Hiking Time 3 hours

This excellent hiking trail starts at Forest Road # 58 and follows Harper Creek to Trail # 260. It is steep in places and crosses the creek several times. Beautiful North Harper Creek Falls is near the trailhead of Forest Road # 58. The trail crosses the stream at the top of the Falls. There is an excellent view of the surrounding area from this vantage point. The trail then drops down following the river, at times passing through dense vegetation. North Harper Creek is an excellent trout stream. Several primitive campsites can be found along the creek. North Harper Creek Trail connects to several loop trails that make excellent one-day hikes.

**Trail # 268-Greentown**  
Distance 6.6 miles  
Elevation at N.C. 181 2700'  
Elevation at Kawana Camp 2400'  
Hiking Time 4 hours

This trail follows an old logging road from N.C. 191 down the ridge to Upper Creek. It continues down Upper Creek, a good trout stream, for one-half mile and then turns up Burnhouse Branch. A primitive campsite is located at the head of Burnhouse Branch. The trail leaves the campsite and crosses the ridge dividing Burke and Avery Counties and continues down a long ridge to its intersection with Trail # 277 near South Harper Creek Falls.

**Trail # 271A-Little Lost Cove Cliffs**  
Distance 1.5 miles  
Elevation at Road # 464 3000'  
Elevation at Road # 464 3000'  
Elevation at Road # 464 3000'  
Hiking Time 1 hour

The trail follows an old logging road up the ridge to an apple orchard. This orchard is maintained to provide food and an opening for wildlife. The trail continues through the orchard up to the top of Little Lost Cove Cliffs, elevation 3400'. From this point there is an excellent view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, dominated by Grandfather Mountain. The trail descends the ridge back to Forest Road # 464, 1.4 miles from the trailhead.

**Trail # 277-Raider Camp**  
Distance 2.2 miles  
Elevation at Trail # 260 2200'  
Elevation at Trail # 260 1500'  
Hiking Time 1 hour

This trail intersects Harper Creek Trail # 260 at the top of the South Harper Creek Falls. It climbs sharply through a series of switchbacks to the top of the ridge. A short spur leads to a rock cliff and a spectacular view of the 200-high South Harper Creek Falls. From here the trail descends to Raider Camp Creek and follows it until it empties into Harper Creek. You may return to your starting point via Trail # 260 for a total of 8 miles, or continue down Harper Creek one mile to N.C. 1328.

**Trail # 278-Phillips Branch**  
Distance 1.5 miles  
Elevation at N.C. 1328 1600'  
Elevation at Trail # 277 1600'  
Hiking Time 1 hour

This trail follows Phillips Branch from N.C. 1328 for one mile and then leads over the ridge to Raider Camp Creek. On the ridge the trail passes through a stand of young timber, site of a previous timber harvest. At Raider Camp Creek you may choose between a short hike down Raider Camp Creek and Harper Creek to N.C. 1328 or hike any desired length up Raider Camp or Harper Creek Trails.

**Trail # 279-Thorps Creek**  
Distance 4.3 miles  
Elevation at Campground 1600'  
Hiking Time 2.5 hours

This is a loop trail from Mortimer Campground. The trail follows Thorps Creek almost to its source near the top of Wilson's Ridge. It then climbs to the top of Schoolhouse Ridge and follows it back down to Mortimer Campground. The highlight of the trail is Thorps Creek with a scenic waterfall about 1/2 mile from the campground. It is rumored that a prospector made his living panning gold from the stream for several years.

**Trail # 269-Wilson Ridge**  
Distance 14.7 miles  
Elevation at N.C. 1328 1400'  
Elevation at Road # 45 2200'  
Hiking Time 3 hours

This Off-Road Vehicle Trail begins on N.C. 1328 and climbs steeply to the crest of Wilson Ridge. The trail follows the ridge, crossing Joe White Mountain and High Knob, to Forest Road # 45. About halfway up the trail crosses private land. Riders should secure permission from the landowners before crossing this section. This is a very rough and steep trail and is not recommended for hiking.

**Trail # 267-Simmons Ridge**  
Distance 4.3 miles  
Elevation at Road # 58 3300'  
Elevation at Road # 45 2200'  
Hiking Time 3 hours

The trail follows an old logging road to the top of Headquarters Mt., elevation 3970'. From there it continues up a steep grade along a logging road to the gap between North Harper and South Harper Creek watersheds. At this point it crosses a dirt road and continues as a trail for the next mile until it intersects an old railroad grade. It follows this grade to Forest Road # 58.

**Trail # 268B-Upper Creek Falls**  
Distance 0.8 mile  
Elevation at N.C. 181 3200'  
Elevation at Falls 2900'  
Hiking Time 30 minutes

This moderate trail leads down to Upper Creek Falls. The trail crosses the creek below the Falls and then winds back up to the base of the Falls. Care should be taken in crossing the stream.

**Trail # 271-Big Lost Cove Cliffs**  
Distance 1.5 miles  
Elevation at Road # 464 3400'  
Elevation at Big Lost Cove Cliffs 3400'  
Hiking Time 1 hour

This trail follows an old logging road up to Big Lost Cove Ridge where it levels out for about a mile before descending to the cliffs.



The Wilson Creek area is bordered by Grandfather Mountain on the west, Linville Gorge on the southwest, and Brown Mountain on the east. Elevations range from 1100 to 3700 feet.

### The Brown Mountain Lights

The Brown Mountain Lights have intrigued residents and visitors alike for hundreds of years. The lights are mentioned in local Indian mythology, and by Gerard de Brabm, a German engineer and the first white man to explore the region (in 1771). The lights have been described as dancing, flickering and darting. Sometimes at night they seem to drift slowly, fading and brightening. At other times they seem to whirl like pinwheels, then dart rapidly away.

One legend explaining the Brown Mountain Lights has been passed down by Lafayette Wiseman, a veteran of the Civil War who served under General Robert E. Lee. He had often observed the Brown Mountain Lights as a child and had heard stories of how the lights were caused by an old slave looking for his master. As the story goes, a planter from the low country traveled to the mountains to hunt, and became lost. One of his slaves came to look for him and was seen searching through the hills with a lantern, night after night. Now, according to the legend, the old slave is gone, but his spirit remains and the old lantern still casts its light.

Of the many scientific theories advanced to explain the Brown Mountain Lights, none has been proven. Some say that the lights are reflections of nearby towns, headlights, or kerosene lamps. Others suggest that the lights are caused by a combination of several minerals and gases in the area. One geologist suggested that possibly deposits of radioactive uranium ore in the area might be responsible for producing the lights.

One place to catch a glimpse of the Brown Mountain Lights is from the overlook south of Jones Ridge on NC 181. Another popular viewing spot is Wiseman's View on the Kettle Memorial Highway which forms the western boundary of the Linville Gorge Wilderness. Brown Mountain, lying east of these two overlooks, is actually a long ridge that adjoins the Wilson Creek drainage.

### Geology

The geology of the Blue Ridge Mountains is among the most complex and least understood in the United States. Several periods of mountain-building, folding, and faulting, occurring over the last several hundred million years here, have shaped these hills. These rocks are metamorphic, which means that they were formed from ancient sedimentary and igneous rocks. As these mountains developed, erosion worked to tear them down. Today's topography is the result of eons of attacks by water, wind, heat, and cold.

## HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia: All hikers must be alert to the conditions that cause hypothermia and its symptoms.

What is it? A lowering of the body temperature. A drop of only five degrees is very serious. Few people whose body temperature drops more than 14 degrees survive. Hypothermia can occur in air temperature as high as 41° F (5° C).

How Does It Happen? Being cold, wet, and exhausted are contributing factors. Many people have died of hypothermia because they thought they could keep warm by moving and not stopping to take the necessary precautions such as adding a sweater or putting on rain gear.

What Are The Symptoms? Early - shivering. Continued shivering means continued seriousness.

Serious Symptoms - slurred speech, impaired judgment, weakness, loss of coordination. Final symptoms - unconsciousness.

What Can I Do? Get the victim into warm clothes. Make him rest. Give him hot drinks and food. If his condition is very serious, put him in a sleeping bag with another person. Make a fire. Put up a tent or make a shelter for the victim. As soon as the patient is able, get him to a hospital for further treatment. Never think that you can continue your trip after one of your party has had hypothermia—go home, return another time.

Wet clothes can lead to heat loss and increase your chances of hypothermia. Remember, wool retains its insulating qualities when it is wet, cotton does not.

## BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL WITH FIRE!

Great care is required at all times when using fire in the woods. Remember, the greatest wilderness is no stronger than a single match or a stray spark.

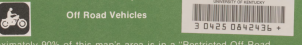
## REMEMBER, TOO...

**PACK OUT WHAT YOU PACK IN.**  
AND FINALLY...  
Drill or otherwise treat water before boiling or drinking it.

For additional information on the National Forests in North Carolina, write: Forest Supervisor, Box 2706, Asheville, North Carolina 28802.



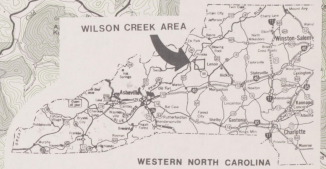
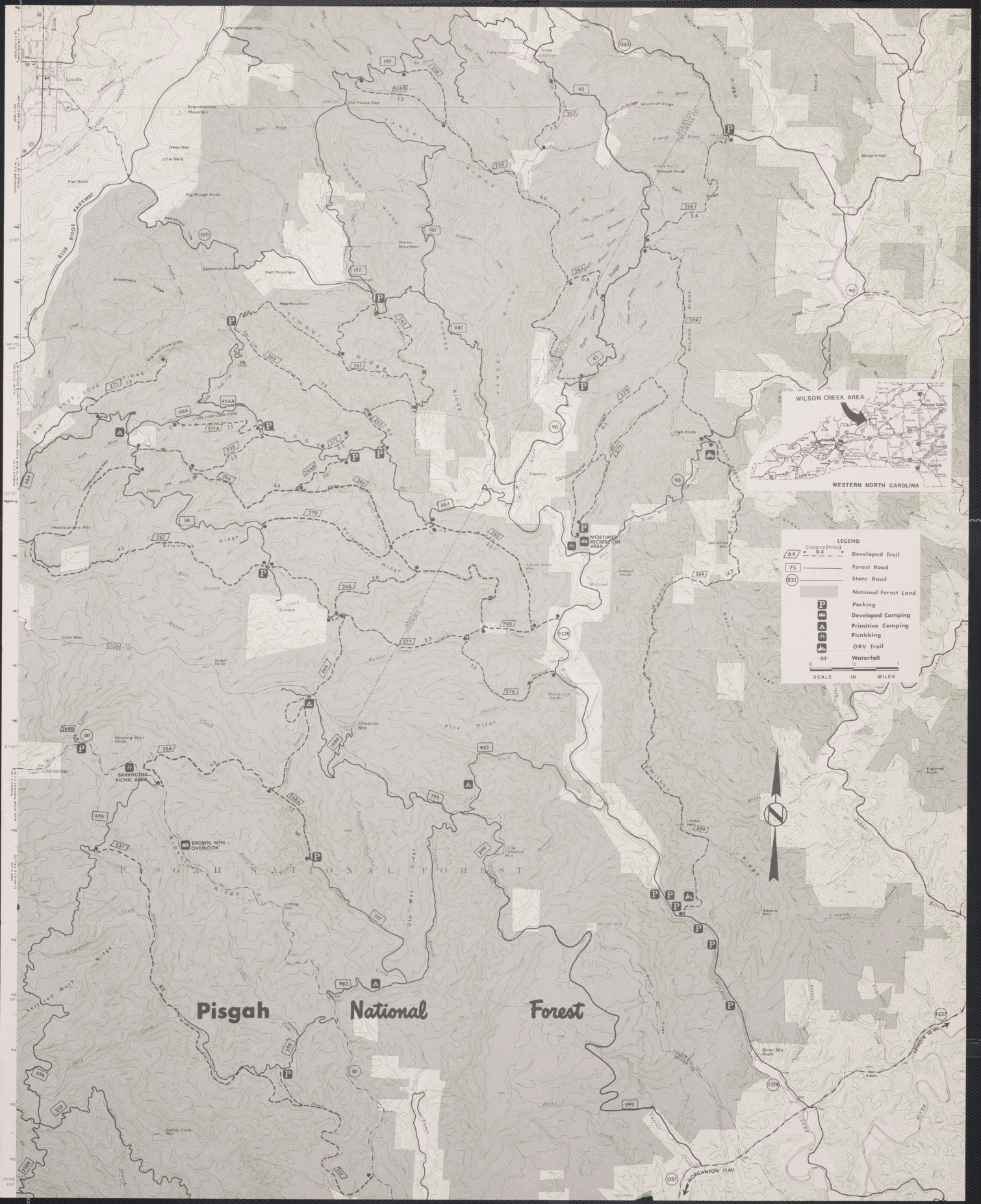
PISGAH National Forest NORTH CAROLINA



Approximately 90% of this map's area is in a "Restricted Off-Road Vehicle Use" category. "Restricted Off-Road Vehicle Use" means the public may use off-road vehicles (less than 40 inches wide) only on trails so designated and signed. The ORV sign shows a main ORV motorcycle. ORV users should seek current use information through the Grandfather Ranger Station, located in the basement of the Library Building in Marion, N.C.

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**LEGEND**

Distance (miles)  
 0.4  
 0.8  
 1.2

- Developed Trail
- Forest Road
- State Road
- National Forest Land
- Parking
- Developed Camping
- Primitive Camping
- Picnicking
- ORV Trail
- Waterfall

SCALE IN MILES



# Pisgah National Forest

Map labels include: Grandfather Mountain, Deep Gap, Little Sand, Flat Rock, Breakneck, Beechfork Knob, Need Mountain, Bee Mountain, Little Lost Cove Cliffs, Headquarters Mt., Cold Mt., Winding Star Knob, SARGHOLE PICNIC AREA, BROWN MTN. OVERLOOK, Old House Gap, Manna Mountain, Jackbean, Leaning, Monkey, Woodruff Ridge, Billys Knob, High Knob, Yellow Birch Knob, Chestnut Mt., Pine Ridge, Little Chestnut Mt., Brown Mt. Knob, and MORGANTON 15 MI.