



TOURISM NEWS

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Info Meeting Takes Place Aug. 4 for Appalachian High Route

BURNSVILLE, N.C. – A new 339.5-mile hiking loop, which begins and ends in downtown Burnsville, is the subject of a community meeting on Thursday, Aug. 4, at 6:30 p.m. at the Yancey County Public Library.

Jake Blood and Jennifer Pharr Davis, co-creators of the Appalachian High Route, will answer questions and provide information about this initiative to attract hikers to the area.

The Appalachian High Route provides eastern America's ultimate hiking challenge by encountering 34 of the 54 recognized peaks in the Appalachian Mountain Range that stretch above 6,000 feet in elevation. It incorporates portions of the Appalachian Trail, Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Black Mountain Crest Trail and Lost Cove Trail to showcase the tallest peaks and highest ridgelines east of the Mississippi River.

The key to uniting these established trails is the Burnsville Connector. It's a 21.5-mile north-south road walk from the Black Mountain Crest Trail in Mount Mitchell State Park to the Lost Cove Trail in Pisgah National Forest. Burnsville is roughly the midpoint of the connector.

The route was created by Blood, a local hiker and officer of the NC High Peaks Trail Association, and Pharr Davis, a noted hiker, author, speaker and hiking company owner. She was named National Geographic Adventurer of the Year in 2011, the year she set the record for the fastest completion of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.).

Pharr Davis became the first known completer of the Appalachian High Route on May 8. She and Blood conceived the Burnsville connector to fulfill Blood's decades-long goal to connect Mount Mitchell, highest point east of the Mississippi River, with the Appalachian Trail.

In addition to Mount Mitchell, hikers completing the route traverses such notable peaks as Mount Craig (second highest in East) and Clingman's Dome (highest in Great Smoky Mountains).

The route runs through three National Park units, three National Forests and a state park. It skirts the boundary of the Biltmore Estate and includes the Black Mountain Crest Trail and portions of the Art Loeb Trail, two trails known for their beauty and biodiversity.

The Yancey County Public Library is located at 321 School Circle in Burnsville.

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