

NC High Peaks Trail Association
& Friends of Mt. Mitchell State Park

NEWSLETTER
May 2020



Happy Birthday High Peaks!

NC High Peaks turns 10 years old this year! We were founded in 2010 and received our 501(c)3 designation in 2012. We have grown from a handful to more than 150 members in just ten years.

According to our vision statement, High Peaks was founded “To advance the public’s awareness, education, understanding and appreciation of nature, wildlife, the natural environment and the numerous healthy lifestyle benefits deriving from the active use of these amenities.” To that end we lead hikes, maintain trails and have an active birding group. We also support Mt. Mitchell State Park, the Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail through formal partnerships. We work closely with these groups and the Appalachian Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest.

In this newsletter and a few more editions to follow, we want to bring you up-to-date on what we’ve been doing, particularly in the last year or so. It has been an exciting time with progress in many areas. We hope you enjoy reading it.

But before we get to the news, we want to give you an opportunity right up front to give something back in appreciation for the work we do to protect and support our local natural treasures. First off, if you are a High Peaks member, THANK YOU for your support. If not, please consider joining High Peaks, which you can do quickly and easily by visiting our website: <https://nchighpeaks.org>.

Beyond simply joining the club, however, you could also help us celebrate our 10-year anniversary by making a donation to the fund-raising campaign we are launching in recognition of this milestone. Over the years we've been fortunate enough to receive a steady stream of membership dues and donations, and these have gone for everything from buying tools needed for trail maintenance to updating and improving our website to all the other expenses incurred by an active, goal-oriented non-profit.

But in recognition of our 10-year anniversary, we want to do something special. One of the most ambitious, badly-needed projects High Peaks has undertaken in the past decade has been the renovation of the Mt. Mitchell Trail. This iconic path is the one folks use when they set out to climb the tallest mountain in the Eastern U.S., and it's in terrible shape, with deeply-eroded gullies, major water control issues and footing that in places is like an obstacle course of toe-stubbing roots and rocks. The job is so big that it's far beyond the capabilities of our small club, even as dedicated as our volunteers are. To that end, High Peaks has already won three large grants from the NC Division of Parks and Recreation to fund sustainable renovations conducted by a trail-building contractor. These grants have been a life-saver, but High Peaks must advance tens of thousands upfront to pay the contractor, and then wait months for reimbursement. Needless to say, this can put quite a strain on the budget of a small club like ours. To help fill the gap we started a Trail Fund several years ago and have received many donations. To celebrate our 10-year anniversary, we've set a goal of \$15,000 in new donations for the fund this year. Please help us reach our goal!

This fall, we plan to hold a fund-raising event at Homeplace Brewing in Burnsville, but why wait? You can help us right now by simply clicking on the link below. The donation may be tax-deductible; check with your tax preparer. Any size donation will be very welcome! Whether you give now, later or both, we THANK YOU for supporting our work.

Donate to the Trail Fund at:
<https://nchighpeaks.org/TrailFund>

John Whitehouse
President, NC High Peaks Trail Association

P.S. Look for future newsletters about NC High Peaks and our accomplishments over our ten year history!

