



LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND REQUEST | FISCAL YEAR 2010

Project Name

Rich Mountain, Tennessee
Cherokee National Forest

Parcel: 100 Acres

LWCF Request: \$600,000

Total Project Value: \$600,000

Natural Resources

High elevation heath bald
Appalachian Trail corridor
Rocky Fork watershed

Significance

Public access—Strategic trail links
Outstanding outdoor recreation
Scenic views and ridgelines
Adjacent to Sampson
Mt. Wilderness
Contiguous wildlife corridor

The Rich Mountain Tract is the crown jewel of the 10,000-acre Rocky Fork tract. This tract is located at the highest point above Rocky Fork and includes the cliffs of Buzzard Rock. The cliffs are only a short hike away from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail through a high elevation heath bald, and provide exceptional views of Rocky Fork, the Sampson Mountain Wilderness, northeast Tennessee, and southwest Virginia. This tract was carved out of the Rocky Fork tract by its former owner, New Forestry, LLC, and includes two separate rights-of-way through the heart of Rocky Fork to access this summit.

Located at the intersection of Coldspring Mountain, along the TN/NC state line, and Rich Mountain, which trends northeast toward Erwin, TN, this tract serves as a critical link in the trail network for the Cherokee National Forest. Acquisition of this tract would permit development of long distance equestrian and mountain biking trails and also provide a critical link in a trail system for the Rocky Fork tract.

This tract is visible at very close range in the A.T. foreground zone, and is also visible from many points along the A.T. including Big Bald, Beauty Spot and the Roan Highlands. Development of this tract would create a significant, negative change in the primitive view of this area as seen from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Sampson Mountain Wilderness, the new Interstate-26 welcome center, and many other points in Greene and Unicoi Counties.

