Blue Ridge Parkway Viewshed Assessments

Summary Report

Gary E. Everhardt Park Break Program
Clemson University Institute for Parks



Sponsor & Project Coordinator
George Ivey,
Director of Blue Ridge Rising

Project Team
Kathryn Wrigley, Univ. of Vermont
Rachel Baer, Univ. of Montana
Keerthi Krishna Devulapally, Auburn Univ.
Payton Egan, Univ. of Georgia
Marie Haidara, Clemson Univ.
Carly Knudson, Univ. of Utah
Faranak Parkami, Arizona State Univ.
Isabelle Staph, Univ. of Tennessee
Dr. Robert Powell, Institute for Parks, Clemson Univ.
Dr. Ryan Sharp, Univ. of Tennessee
Dr. Lauren Stephens, Virginia Wesleyan Univ.

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I. Introduction

With over 16.5 million visitors annually, the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) showcases scenic mountain views along its 469-mile length and is the gateway to many unique cultural attractions. To maintain the scenic views and to reduce the possibility of development negatively impacting the quality and beauty of these viewsheds, organizations including the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, through initiatives such as Blue Ridge Rising, have partnered with the National Park Service, local communities, and other community organizations to establish a baseline qualitative assessment for all viewsheds along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

With support from the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, the Clemson University Institute for Parks in partnership with the George Wright Society and the School of Natural Resources at the University of Tennessee has coordinated the 2026 Gary E. Everhardt Park Break Program to assist in this effort. The Gary E. Everhardt Park Break Program is a fully supported leadership and service-learning program for graduate students. This year eight Gary E. Everhardt Park Break fellows, representing eight unique universities, traveled to the Blue Ridge Parkway for one week to conduct baseline qualitative assessments of 59 viewsheds between milepost 202 and milepost 317.5. These qualitative viewshed assessments will assist the Blue Ridge Parkway and partners in identifying the most unique and highest priority viewsheds for future voluntary conservation. In addition, the qualitative descriptions and photographs of each viewshed may be used to develop site narratives and promotional materials of underutilized destinations to assist in distributing visitation more evenly across the Blue Ridge Parkway.

II. Gary E. Everhardt Park Break and Research Team

The Gary E. Everhardt Park Break is a seven-to-ten-day park-based leadership and service-learning program for graduate students from various backgrounds. Applications are solicited prior to the program. Between seven and ten graduate students considering careers in park and cultural site management are selected for participation. Upon arrival, the selected students explore topics of importance to the host park and interact with park researchers, natural and cultural resource managers, and policy makers. The program is focused on providing graduate students with leadership opportunities in parks and protected areas, and is the only graduate-level service, science, and stewardship program that focuses on scientific and other scholarly inquiry in a park managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Since 2008, more than 200 students have participated in the program which is coordinated by the Clemson University Institute for Parks in partnership with the George Wright Society. Below are the biographies of the eight "Everhardt Fellows" and the three faculty facilitators that participated in the 2026 Blue Ridge Parkway program.

Team Photo



Everhardt Fellows



Carly Knudson just completed her first year as a PhD student in Parks, Recreation and Tourism at the University of Utah. Growing up in rural Idaho and working as a multi-day river guide, Carly learned from a young age the benefit of being outside, and the need and responsibility to take care of these spaces. Carly is interested in social and environmental justice research within nature-based recreation and tourism, focusing not only on where equity issues and disparities exist, but also on how to leverage recreation and tourism to drive positive change and impact alongside local communities. When not in school, Carly likes playing in whitewater, on snow, and on trails with people she loves, preferably with a post-adventure good side mission to a local brewery.



Keerthi Krishna Devulapally is a master's student studying Forestry at Auburn University with a passion for wildlife conservation, protected landscapes, and the connection between people and nature. Originally from Telangana, India, her research explores how communities living near Amrabad Tiger Reserve and Kawal Tiger Reserve in Telangana state, India, perceive tiger conservation and environmental justice. Through her work, she combines ecological research with community perspectives to better understand how conservation efforts can protect biodiversity while also supporting local livelihoods and cultural values.



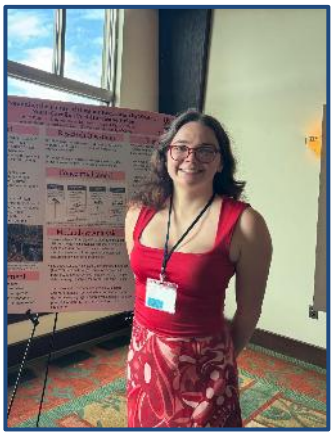
Rachel Baer is a graduate student at the University of Montana (UM), receiving her Masters in Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management. Originally from California, she got her undergraduate degree in Forestry and Natural Resources from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. After graduation, she spent 3 years working as an Interpretive-Ranger for the National Park Service at Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Zion, and Big Bend National Parks as well as Alcatraz Island. At UM, she works as a Research Assistant at the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) and is conducting her research on trail building volunteers in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and the motivating factors that drive people to protect these wilderness spaces.



Faranak Parkami is a PhD candidate at the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University, specializing in tourism. Her work is informed by close collaboration with wildlife rangers and hands-on volunteer fieldwork, which has shaped her focus on wildlife conservation, particularly the illegal wildlife trade. Her work primarily examines tourists as key actors in the illegal wildlife trade through exploring their perceptions and understandings of this issue. She also seeks to shed light on how a lack of awareness, particularly among wealthier communities, can (un)intentionally exacerbate conservation issues. When she gets some free time, she likes to paint, sing, and do bouldering!



Isabelle Staph is a Ph.D. student in the Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lab at the University of Tennessee, with a B.S. in Wildlife and M.S. in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Purdue University. Her research interests include human-wildlife interactions and qualitative inquiry of all kinds, but especially phenomenology. Her current research examines coexistence with mountain lions through a phenomenological lens in White Pine County, Nevada. Outside of work, she enjoys walking, crocheting, and watching movies!



Payton Egan is a M.S. student in the Tourism Lab within the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia. She holds a B.S. in Recreation Management from Appalachian State University. Her current research focuses on visitor preferences and management considerations within the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests, in response to Hurricane Helene. Her broader research interests center on the human dimensions of natural disasters and environmental disturbances, especially within rural landscapes. In her free time, she enjoys board games, reading, and a good laugh.



Marie Haidara is a first-year PhD student in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management at Clemson University. Originally from Mali, she later lived in Morocco before moving to the United States to earn an M.S. in Hospitality and Tourism Management from the University of South Florida. Her multicultural background has shaped her passion for tourism, cultural storytelling, and community connection. Her research explores how tourism and recreation experiences influence people's relationships with landscapes, heritage, and place, with a focus on inclusive visitor experiences, sustainable tourism, and cultural representation. At the heart of her work is a commitment to cultural diversity, community empowerment, and the belief that every story deserves to be told. Whether in the classroom, at conferences, or in the field, she brings curiosity, empathy, and a genuine love for learning across cultures.



Kathryn Wrigley is a fourth-year PhD student in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism at the University of Vermont. Kathryn's academic background in ecology, conservation, and forestry, combined with her decade plus in recreation management have coalesced in a passion to more fully understand the intersection of people and natural spaces. She loves thinking about how intentional partnerships, policies, and procedures can drive effective visitor use management strategies, create climate resilient outcomes, and promote access for all natural spaces. In her free time, Kathryn enjoys hiking, gravel rides, backcountry skiing, cooking, reading, and writing letters to friends.

Faculty Facilitators



Dr. Bob Powell is the Director of the Institute for Parks at Clemson University and the George B. Hartzog, Jr. Endowed Professor in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management. He also has an appointment in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation. Bob's research and outreach program, which focuses on environmental education and interpretation, park and protected area management, sustainable tourism, and biodiversity conservation, is supported by organizations such as the US National Park Service, National Science Foundation, and US Forest Service and has taken him to over 40 countries and 7 continents.



Dr. Ryan Sharp is a Professor in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Tennessee. His teaching and research focus on visitor use management in parks and protected areas. He has been fortunate to work with agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. National Park Service and partner with international agencies in countries such as Argentina, Aruba and the Seychelles.



Dr. Lauren Stephens is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sport and Recreation Professions at Virginia Wesleyan University. She holds a B.S. in Secondary Education, M.P.W. in Professional Writing, and Ph.D. in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, with a Youth Development program focus. She is passionate about student learning and engagement, where her approach to teaching and mentoring is grounded in viewing students as people first and students second. Stephens' research focuses on teaching and learning through pedagogy, course design, experiential learning, and relational development.

III. Methods

The Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) showcases scenic mountain views along its 469-mile length and is the gateway to many unique cultural attractions. To maintain the scenic views and to reduce the possibility of development negatively impacting the quality and beauty of these viewsheds, organizations including the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, through initiatives such as Blue Ridge Rising, have partnered with the National Park Service, local communities, and other community organizations to establish a baseline qualitative assessment and to identify and prioritize viewsheds for management action and future voluntary conservation efforts (e.g., Anderson & Rex, 2019). The Gary Everhart Park Break program conducted baseline viewshed assessments between milepost 202 and milepost 317.5. Based on past research and literature review, we adapted viewshed evaluation criteria and methods based on Miller et al. (2024) and the NPS Visual Resource Inventory (Peters et al., 2018; Sullivan & Meyer, 2016). For each viewshed, a combination of quantitative scoring and qualitative descriptors helped to distinguish the overall quality of each designated viewshed.

Selection of Sites

Along the 469 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP), there are approximately 280 designated overlooks that focus on historic resources, unique natural features, and/or picturesque views. Each designated overlook provides parking so that visitors may disembark from their vehicles and directly engage with the recreational opportunity. However, not every designated overlook has a scenic view, and not every scenic view along the Parkway is found at an official parking lot, such as views from rock outcrops seen along a trail. Between milepost 202 and milepost 317.5, the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation identified 59 viewsheds for evaluation (Table 1).

Viewshed Assessments and Evaluation Criteria

For the purposes of this report, a viewshed can be defined as the view that a person can see from a specific point (e.g., Miller et al., 2024). A viewshed can be characterized and described by a range of geographic characteristics, such as viewpoint location, view direction, and view width and distance, as well as aesthetic characteristics, such as the perceived visual variety and complexity, coherence and legibility, ephemeral qualities, uniqueness, resource quality, incongruence of land use, and vividness (e.g., Kaplan, Kaplan, & Ryan, 1998; Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). Based on past research and literature review, we adapted viewshed evaluation criteria and methods based on Miller et al. (2024) and the NPS Visual Resource Inventory (Peters et al., 2018; Sullivan & Meyer, 2016). These methods were intended to measure the geographic characteristics and the aesthetic qualities of the viewshed (see appendix) and were measured through observation by members of the research team at each viewshed/viewpoint using both quantitative measures as well as qualitative notes. Quantitative measures included the following:

> ***Viewshed size*** reflects both the relative width (degrees) and the number of depth zones (foreground, middle ground, and background) associated with the viewshed (Miller et

al., 2024). This variable is measured on a three-point scale: 2=Panoramic view (180 degrees or greater) that is unobstructed and includes all distance zones (foreground, middle ground, and background); 1=Approximately 90 degrees wide view with only foreground and middle ground depths represented; 0=Very narrow view with only foreground depth.

Variety and visual complexity reflect the variation in the visual characteristics of the landscape including patterns, color, form, line, textures, and vegetation (e.g., Kaplan, Kaplan, & Ryan, 1998; Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). Variety and visual complexity were measured on a three-point scale: 2= High levels of patterns, forms, ridges, lines, textures and a sense of depth; 1= Moderate level of patterns, forms, ridges, lines, textures, and depth; and 0= Low levels of variety and visual complexity.

Harmony/organization (Legibility and coherence) of a viewshed pertains to the visual composition, spatial relationships, and scale relationships that reflect the framing of the view, the presence of a focal point, and degree of harmonious land uses associated with natural and traditional pastoral views. ***Coherence*** refers to how well a view is visually organized, structured, and makes sense, allowing for immediate understanding (Kaplan, Kaplan, & Ryan, 1998; Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller, et al., 2024). Key elements of coherence include repetition of elements, structural order, and harmony. ***Legibility*** refers to how easy it is to visually navigate the landscape with landmarks, a focal point, and edges/framing (Kaplan, Kaplan, & Ryan, 1998; Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). This criteria is measured on a three-point scale: 2=High levels of visual composition, including framing or edges that define and focus the view, a focal point, and the land use is harmonious with the surroundings and understandable (e.g., a valley view defined by two ridges that orient the eye and provide a focal point towards the head of the valley); 1=May contain framing or a focal point but is more diffused (i.e., visual composition provides some coherence and legibility); 0=No visual focal point, landmarks, or framing (i.e., difficult to assess spatial relationships and scale).

Ephemeral qualities refer to features in the foreground and middle ground such as seasonal elements including fall foliage colors, wildflower blooms, and pastoral variations such as crops and livestock (Miller et al., 2024). Scoring followed recommendations by Miller et al. (2024) and used a 3-point scale: 2=Frequent/predictable; 1=Infrequent but predictable; 0=Unpredictable.

Positive human-influenced content in the viewshed includes traditional and historic land uses that complement the natural landscape (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). This concept was measured using a 3-point scale: 2=Striking and visually appealing that is harmonious with the natural and historic character; 1=Noticeable but not visually striking, and somewhat appealing and harmonious with the natural and historic character; 0=Not visible.

Incongruent or distracting content in a viewshed include human infrastructure and land uses such as powerlines, mines, and junkyards that distract from or degrade the traditional and natural views and generally occur in the foreground or middle ground (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). This was measured on a three-point scale (-5=Highly visible and large in scale with the potential of multiple discordant land uses; -3=Visible discordant content or land use but small in scale; 0=Not visible) that was more heavily weighted because of the theoretical negative impact that discordant content in a viewshed can have on the visitor experience.

Uniqueness reflects the relative and comparative distinctness of the viewshed as compared to all other viewsheds available in a geographic area. This was measured on a three-point scale: 2=Completely unique or a one-of-a-kind view; 1=Similar to other views but has a unique perspective or element; 0=Common or similar to other views.

Quality and condition measures both the perceived health of the natural elements and the perceived condition of built landscape elements (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021). This was measured using a three-point scale: 2=Most elements are of high quality and in good/healthy condition and free of debris; 1=Most elements are in fair condition with some natural elements appearing unhealthy or with some damage, or debris; 0=Most elements are in poor condition, natural elements look unhealthy, damaged, or in poor condition, and the built environment, if applicable, is poorly maintained (debris/trash, etc.) and/or is in an advanced state of disrepair.

Estimated duration of viewing reflects the estimated time that visitors will view, engage, or utilize the viewshed (Miller et al., 2024). This was measured on a three-point scale: 2=Greater than 3 minutes; 1=1-3 minutes; and 0=less than 1 minute.

Vividness is an overall ranking and reflects the viewshed's "wow factor." Considerations include the scoring related to the size, variety and complexity, harmony and organization, uniqueness, and ephemeral qualities, as well as quality and condition of landscape elements (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller, et al., 2024). Vividness was measured on a three-point scale: 2=Vivid, high scores on 4 of 6 of the characteristics listed; 1=Somewhat vivid, high scores on 2 of the characteristics; 0=No wow at all, forgettable, and/or a good place to let the trees grow up and block the view.

The research team also recorded ***qualitative notes*** about each viewshed pertaining to distinctive natural features, positive manmade features, ephemeral features, and incongruent or distracting features. The table below reflects the assessment form used to score each viewshed in this report.

Pilot Testing and Training of Evaluation Team

We developed and refined all observational techniques and data collection procedures through extensive pilot testing. Over a series of Zoom meetings, we first reviewed all procedures and defined all viewshed characteristics to ensure a comprehensive assessment as well as comparability with the Scenic Virginia Viewshed Evaluation Form and the NPS Visual Resource Inventory Quality Assessment Form (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller, et al., 2024). Following revisions based on iterative feedback from the research team and the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, the assessment/evaluation form was finalized for use in the study. During the initial day of data collection (e.g., viewshed assessment), all 11 members of the research team (eight field researchers and three supervisors) scored four viewsheds as individuals before debriefing as a team to compare and discuss at length any discrepancies in scoring. This discussion allowed the team to clarify the operational definitions and/or measurement of each viewshed element under consideration and strengthened the consistency of scoring across the team. On all other days of data collection, we repeated this process on the first viewshed evaluation of the day. We used these processes to develop consistent, reliable, and valid scoring of all observations across the eight field researchers.

Data Collection

The viewshed assessment tool was uploaded into Survey 123 in ARCGIS and the team utilized tablets to collect all qualitative and quantitative data, as well as to take landscape pictures from each viewshed location. Four pairs of researchers visited and collected data at 59 viewsheds. Upon arrival at a viewshed, the pair stood at the viewpoint to assess the viewshed on the designated criteria. Completion of the form took approximately 20-30 minutes per viewshed and quantitative scores measuring the viewshed attributes listed above were recorded. All researchers also recorded qualitative notes describing the viewshed and surrounding setting, which would inform the narrative for each location. Finally, to increase internal consistency and validity, we collected all data in pairs and rotated the pairings daily.

Data Cleaning Procedures

Data from the 59 viewshed observation sheets were entered into Microsoft Excel for screening and analysis. First, after completing 37 viewshed assessments during the first two days, the research team reviewed all scoring of each viewshed to ensure an accurate assessment. Evaluating the aesthetic qualities of a viewshed is a somewhat comparative process, and this review resulted in the adjustment of a small number of scores. This process also allowed us to screen for any missing data and to update the qualitative notes to more closely reflect the viewshed experience.

IV. Blue Ridge Parkway Outlook Descriptions

Park Break Fellows described and evaluated 59 viewsheds, which are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Outlook Names and Mileage Markers

Mile	Outlook Name	Mile	Outlook Name
202.8	Granite Quarry Parking Overlook	**266.8**	Mt. Jefferson
203.9	Piedmont Overlook	**267.8**	Betseys Rock Falls
203.9	Piedmont Overlook Agriculture scene	**270.2**	Lewis Fork Overlook
213.0	Blue Ridge Music Center Amphitheater	**272.0**	Cascades Parking Area
217.5	Cumberland Knob Picnic Area	**274.3**	Elk Mountain Overlook
218.6	Fox Hunter's Paradise Parking Overlook	**277.3**	Stoney Fork Overlook
218.6	Fox Hunter's Paradise Trail Viewpoint	**277.9**	Osborne Mountain
230.1	Little Glade Mill Pond	**277.9**	Deep Gap View
232.5	Stone Mountain Overlook	**278.3**	Carroll Gap Overlook
233.7	Bullhead Mountain Overlook	**289.5**	Raven Rocks Overlook
235.0	Mahogany Rock Overlook	**289.8**	Yadkin Valley Overlook
235.7	Devil's Garden Park Overlook	**290.4**	Thunder Hill Overlook
236.9	Air Bellows Overlook	**294.0**	Moses Cone Carriage Barn
238.5	Brinegar Cabin	**294.0**	Flat Top Manor Front Porch
240.6	Low Notch Overlook (aka No Name Parking Area)	**294.6**	Bass Lake (off Shoals Mill Rd to US 321)
240.6	Low Notch Overlook-North (aka No Name Parking Area)	**295.3**	Sims Creek Overlook
241.1	Doughton Park – Picnic Area (picnic area road closed as of 5/6)	**295.9**	Sims Pond Overlook
241.1	Wildcat Rocks Overlook	**296.4**	Price Picnic Area
242.4	Alligator Back Parking Area Viewpoint	**296.7**	Price Lake Overlook
242.4	Alligator Back Parking Area View Back Across Parkway	**297.1**	Lakeview Overlook (boat rental parking area)
243.4	Bluff Mountain	**303.9**	Yonahlossee Overlook
244.7	Basin Cove Overlook NNE	**305.2**	Beacon Heights Parking Area
244.7	Basin Cove Overlook SE	**305.2**	Beacon Heights SW
252.8	Sheets Gap Parking Area SE	**305.2**	Beacon Heights SE
252.8	Sheets Gap Parking Area SW	**305.2**	Beacon Heights NE Grandfather
260.3	Jumpinoff Rocks Parking Area	**306.6**	Grandfather Mountain Parking Overlook
260.3	Jumpinoff Rocks Trail Viewpoint	**307.6**	Little Bald Overlook
264.4	The Lump Overlook	**308.3**	Flat Rock Parking Area
264.4	On Top of the Lump	**310**	Lost Cove Cliffs Parking Overlook
		N/A	Erwin's Viewpoint of Linville Falls

202.8 | Granite Quarry Overlook



Description: The *Granite Quarry Overlook* is a grassy pasture-framed panoramic stop overlooking a view of a natural resource. An interpretive sign at the parking lot identifies the natural and cultural features visible from the overlook, which offers a dispersed panoramic view of a semi-developed Blue Ridge landscape with distant ridgelines in the background. The signage indicates that one of the largest granite quarries is visible in the background; however, it was difficult to spot. The quality and condition of the resource was high, but in the foreground, the trees partially covered the view of the overlook, and it did lack some coherence regarding the direction of the view. A nearby powerline and noticeable highway noise also impacted and detracted from the viewing experience. Overall, this was ranked to be a relatively common view that shows elevation changes as one gets closer to the Virginia border.

Criteria	**Viewshed Score**
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	-5
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**4**

203.9 | Piedmont Overlook



Description: The *Piedmont Overlook* view consists of an overlapping foreground, middle ground, and background, which reduces the dimension and depth within the scene. This disruption affects the continuity and picturesque qualities one looks for when choosing an overlook. The visible landscape consists of several background ridges, with the primary focus centered on a valley within the midground. Key visual aspects within this view include ridges, forests, valleys, pastures, hardwood and pine stands, and grassy knolls. The foreground obstruction reduces visibility, depth perception, and the overall quality of the viewshed. If management within this viewshed continues to be limited, the restriction of the view will continue.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**11**

203.9 | Piedmont Overlook Agriculture Scene



Description: This Piedmont Overlook provides a close-range perspective of agricultural development. Comprised of multiple agricultural residential properties, the composition is defined by working-landscape elements such as cultivated fields, crops, livestock enclosures, agricultural structures, and an unpaved rural road. These elements convey an active, lived-in Appalachian countryside and the ongoing evolution of rural life. Traditional elements such as barns, fencelines, and dirt roads coexist with modern housing and updated agricultural practices, illustrating the region's progression through time. The blend of past and present enriches the character of the view, offering a unique perspective not found elsewhere along the Parkway.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	0
Ephemeral qualities	2
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	-3
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**9**

213.0 | Blue Ridge Music Center Amphitheater



Description: The *Blue Ridge Music Center Amphitheater* seating offers a completely unique view. This overlook is a short walk from the visitor center, which is a must-see stop for visitors that highlights the history of music and artists in Virginia and North Carolina. The surrounding ridges are heavily forested, with a blend of coniferous and deciduous trees, creating a soothing and pleasant frame for the viewer. While the overall view is not the most vivid or complex, it should remain a high-priority location for conservation efforts to ensure concert goers enjoy the natural backdrop as opposed to developed land behind the stage. The middle ground and background feature several heavily forested ridges which will provide opportunities for beautiful fall foliage viewing.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**12**

217.5 | Cumberland Knob Picnic Area



Description: The *Cumberland Knob Picnic Area* provides a window view of Pilot Mountain through the trees, which will look lovely during the fall. Overall, this view will delight those who want to view Pilot Mountain while visiting where the Blue Ridge Parkway Construction started in 1935. Pilot Mountain is known as a distinct natural feature in North Carolina.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	0
Variety/Visual Complexity	0
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**7**

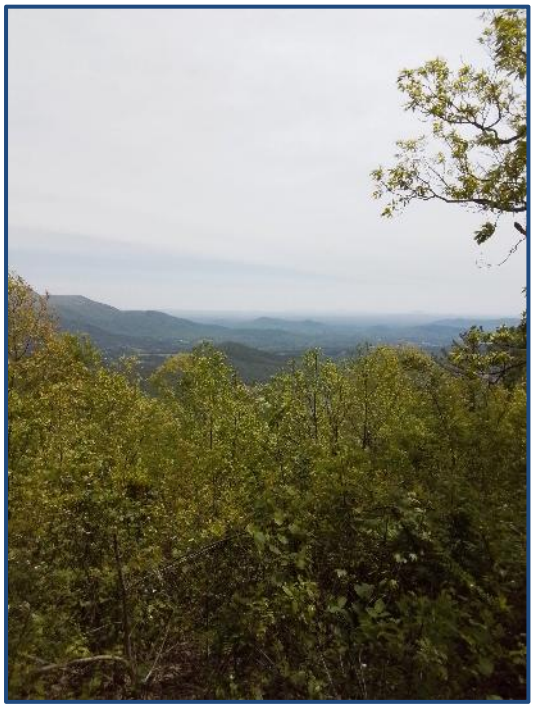
218.6 | Fox Hunter's Paradise Parking Overlook



Description: *Fox Hunter's Paradise Parking Overlook* viewers are welcomed with a wide range of patterns and ridges that will look dramatic during the fall foliage season. The juxtaposition of the farm fields and the foliage will add excitement to the view. This panoramic view of the rural valley constitutes many distinctive natural features including pastures, forest, yellow and white wildflowers, and a variety of crops.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	2
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**12**

218.6 | Fox Hunter's Paradise Trail Viewpoint



Description: The *Fox Hunters' Paradise Trail Viewpoint* offers a nearly 360-degree panorama of multiple ridges and valleys, creating a strong sense of depth across the surrounding landscape. Manmade features such as distant farms are visible and blend reasonably well with the rural mountain scenery. Seasonal features such as fall colors, blooming wildflowers, and potential wildlife activity further enhance the visual experience. A rock wall in the foreground adds character and helps frame the overlook, making the view more visually appealing. Overall, this viewshed is in good condition and provides an immersive mountain viewing experience.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**15**

230.1 | Little Glade Mill Pond



Description: *Little Glade Mill Pond* provides viewers with a distinctive and engaging experience. Located a few hundred feet from the parking area, the pond offers a serene setting for visitors. Frogs and fish near the water's surface provide excitement and interest to this scene, encouraging visitors to stretch their legs and spend more time soaking in the view. Blooming flowers surround the water's edge. Together, these features create an intimate and scenic setting that could even serve as a meaningful location for a small wedding, connecting people through the beauty of nature.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	0
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**13**

232.5 | Stone Mountain Overlook



Description: *Stone Mountain Overlook* is somewhat unique compared to other views along the parkway, with an expansive view that features several ridges, agricultural pastures with cattle, and a large, U-shaped valley in the distance. While the natural landscape is the focal point of this view, several farms and pastures in the middle ground capture the viewer's eye. Both the natural and man-made features offer visual complexity that will captivate visitors and encourage them to enjoy this stop for several minutes. The view is pleasantly framed by the trees, which encourages the viewer to focus on the number of valleys. It is worth noting that the viewshed includes several picnic tables, including one that looks directly over the main view, further encouraging viewers to soak in this landscape.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

233.7 | Bullhead Mountain Overlook



Description: *Bullhead Mountain Overlook* is a classically framed panoramic view that highlights Bullhead Mountain and offers an interesting focal point of a higher elevation peak present along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Beyond the focused view of Bullhead Mountain, a series of distant ridgelines further shape the view. A U-shaped framing of deciduous trees provides unique texture and leads the viewer's eye directly to Bullhead in a cohesive, harmonious manner. The forested foreground takes up a primary share of the view with blooming blackberries scattered sparsely throughout. The views do not feature human influence and are of high quality and condition. Fall foliage will surely be a treat from this location.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

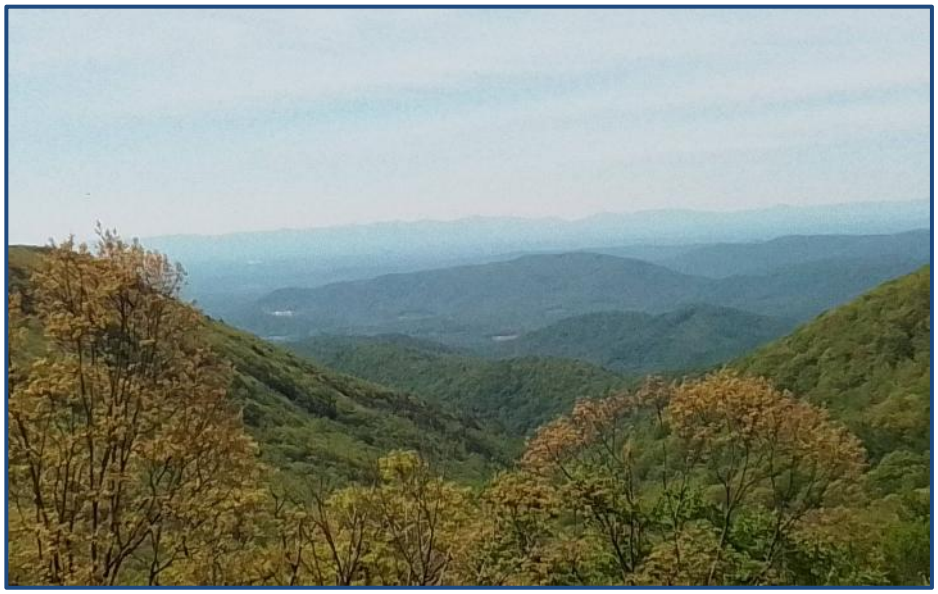
235.0 | Mahogany Rock Overlook



Description: *Mahogany Rock Overlook* offers a feature view of one ridge along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Unfortunately, the current state of the viewshed is in disarray as the trees in the middle ground tower above the ridgeline, and the presence of kudzu and blackberry brambles in the foreground serve as a distraction rather than a welcomed addition to the landscape. This would be a good area to continue to allow the trees to keep growing and focus resources on better viewpoints rather than improving this one.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	0
Harmony/Organization	0
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	0
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**3**

235.7 | Devil's Garden Overlook



Description: The *Devil's Garden Overlook* provides a framed view of ridges and valleys with a ridgeline in the distance providing a backdrop to complete the view. A handful of pastures in the distance provide a break in the forested landscape. There are different types of trees that will turn a variety of colors in the fall, and which also will provide color and texture in the spring as trees flower and grow leaves. You will also experience bird song and other natural sounds that add to the viewing experience.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**11**

236.9 | Air Bellows Overlook



Description: *Air Bellows Overlook* offers a broad, scenic panorama of rural valleys and layered ridges that create a strong sense of depth. Ephemeral features such as fall colors and wildflowers only add to the visual character of the overlook. The pastures in the landscape add texture and variety to the forested landscape. Some cell phone towers on the right side of the view may distract some viewers. There is also some natural tree debris. Depending on maintenance goals, removing these elements could improve the overall scenic quality and create a more visually cohesive overlook.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**11**

238.5 | Brinegar Cabin



Description: *Brinegar Cabin* serves as a unique feature view of a distinct cultural resource, focusing on the homesteading history of the Blue Ridge Parkway by offering an inside glimpse into the Brinegar family. The rustic cabin and historic buildings bring a distinct characteristic to the viewsheds of the Blue Ridge Parkway by focusing on the history of the place and its cultural significance. The surrounding mix of pine trees and deciduous trees along with the fresh spring and wooden buildings provides visitors with a glimpse into the hardships of daily life for homesteaders, especially considering the remote nature of this environment. There is potential to further develop the homesteading history here by considering replanting produce in the small garden and adding more waysides elaborating on the homesteading lifestyle that families pursued here.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	0
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	2
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**12**

240.6 | Low Notch Overlook (aka No Name Parking Area)



Description: The *Low Notch Overlook* is a mysterious area with great framing that leads your gaze to a focal point in the middle. The view has multiple distance zones, giving it a sense of depth. Something interesting about this view is that although it had a lot of trees in the foreground, part of the middle ground was still visible between the trees. There was a strong sense of pattern created by the vegetation and the variety of trees in the foreground, the forest in the middle ground, and the distant mountains. The dark tone of some trees, the different shades of green, and fall colors will make it even more pleasant.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	0
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**7**

240.6 | Low Notch Overlook-North (aka No Name Parking Area)



Description: *Low Notch Overlook-North* is an impressive panoramic view of hills, valleys, and ridges. The human-influenced elements add pleasantly to the landscape. The fence, which serves as an entrance to the Mountain to Sea Trail, gave the area a charming historical feel. Although it is a beautiful view, additional signage will help catch folks' attention and guide them toward the overlook. The landscape contains a wide variety of patterns created by the mix of forest, trail, Parkway itself, pines, pasture, and distant ridges. Fall foliage will be viewable, and in spring there are likely lush patches of wildflowers and birdsong. While the landscape did not have a single dominant focal point, the arrangement of the elements guides viewers' eyes throughout the scene in a comforting way.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**13**

241.1 | Doughton Park - Picnic Area (picnic area road closed as of 5/6)



Description: The *Doughton Park Picnic Area* is located about a half mile off the Blue Ridge Parkway, where the Doughton Trailhead begins. The views before beginning the hike are stunning, allowing visitors to soak in a sea of ridges and valleys. The visibility of agriculture and pasture in the background is a delightful addition to the view. This spot will be optimal for both wildflowers in the early spring and the changing leaves in the fall.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	2
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**14**

241.1 | Wildcat Rocks Overlook



Description: The *Wildcat Rocks Overlook* provides a sweeping view of several ridges with a feature view of Caudill Cabin highlighting the "extreme isolation of mountain folk" (Stanley Abbott, Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent). The lack of development in the surrounding ridges and valleys fosters the feeling of isolation and provides viewers an opportunity to reflect on the lives of folks in the past and today. The depth of the view offers an ideal fall foliage viewing location, with the closer ridges providing an opportunity to see individual trees aflame and the view into the distance providing the expansive, lush foliage that is a hallmark of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	2
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**17**

242.4 | Alligator Back Parking Area Viewpoint



Description: The *Alligator Back Parking Area Viewpoint* is marked by a built rock outcropping that allows for quality viewing and photo opportunities. The prominent features of this framed panoramic view are ridgelines of forested rolling hills. It offers a unique perspective with the pines scattering the foreground adding to visual texture, cohesion, and focus. Distant ridgelines are also noticeable, but not the prominent feature of the viewshed. The view does not contain evidence of human impact in the primary viewshed, but to the viewer's right there is an interesting framing of a small section of the Parkway. Overall, it is in high quality and condition. While a relatively common view for the Parkway, the harmonious frame and evergreen diversity makes it worth your time.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**13**

242.4 | Alligator Back Parking Area View Back Across Parkway



Description: *Alligator Back Parking Area View Back Across Parkway* offers a panoramic view of a rural valley with a variety of agriculture and woodlands. This panoramic view boasts rolling hills with different types of trees with differing shapes, sizes, and textures. Across the landscape, the changing conditions provide for a wonderful opportunity to experience spring into late summer wildflower blooms as well as vibrant fall colors when the leaves change.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**11**

243.4 | Bluff Mountain



Description: The *Bluff Mountain* stop presents a panoramic view of layered ridges and valleys surrounded by thick forest, creating a highly scenic and textured mountain landscape. This viewpoint offers strong depth and natural framing, with ridges on both sides guiding the viewer's attention across the scene. A small distant pasture is visible. Ephemeral features such as fall foliage, wildflowers, butterflies, and the sounds of birds enhance the immersive experience of the overlook. No incongruent or visually distracting features were observed. This view was accessed by walking down the stairs from the parking area, providing a slightly more enclosed and intimate perspective of the landscape.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**15**

244.7| Basin Cove Overlook NNE



Description: *Basin Cove Overlook NNE* is foreground dominated, with dense overgrowth obscuring nearly all middle ground and background elements. The vegetation prevents meaningful visualization beyond the immediate foreground. The absence of middle ground and foreground elements results in a composition that lacks congruency with adjacent viewpoints. This is reflected in the limited interpretation of elements such as human influence, the presence of infrastructure, or overall visual quality. This assessment reflects conditions before an already planned viewshed restoration, and the current evaluation openly underscores the potential for improvement in many categories once restorative viewshed management occurs.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**8**

244.7 | Basin Cove Overlook SE



Description: *Basin Cove Overlook SE* is a partially framed feature view of a rolling landscape with stacked ridgelines extending into the distance. The view is accessed from the parking lot on the South end of the curve, directly adjacent to a trail map and interpretive sign that intersects with an entrance point to the Mountain to Sea Trail. The view is primarily dominated by small pines and bushes that offer a variety of perspectives and textures. Despite there being a gathering platform around the trail signage, the site and place for viewing is unclear, and views from the overlook sign are impacted in some areas by overgrowth. A unique feature of this overlook is its direct access to a more expansive trail system, allowing visitors to experience the landscape from multiple perspectives.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**8**

252.8 | Sheets Gap Parking Area SE



Description: *Sheets Gap Parking Area SE* is an example of a single-dimensional view, presumably, of several ridges; however, with the dense foreground, we are unable to confirm. This lack of visual perspective regarding the particulars of the view itself has led us to grade the viewshed according to what was available. This means the rating does not include the potential this view has to offer should management strategies be implemented to increase visibility across geographic planes. Considering this, we are also unable to validate the influence of negative aspects of viewing, such as close human infrastructure and industrialization. The increase in foliage within the foreground does contain benefits, including increased wildlife activity and seasonal changes that bring out notable qualities such as wildflowers, snow dusted trees, and leaf changes.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	0
Variety/Visual Complexity	0
Harmony/Organization	0
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	0
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**2**

252.8 | Sheets Gap Parking Area SW



Description: At *Sheets Gap Parking Area SW*, the pre-restoration viewshed is dominated by natural features, including a pond and ridges. However, dense trees in the foreground limit visibility and partially block the scenic view. No positive manmade features are visible, and the landscape does not have a clear focal point. Ephemeral features such as fall colors, wildflowers, and possible wildlife may be present because of the lake. No incongruent or distracting elements were observed, and overall character of the view is consistent with the southeast viewshed.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	0
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	0
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**6**

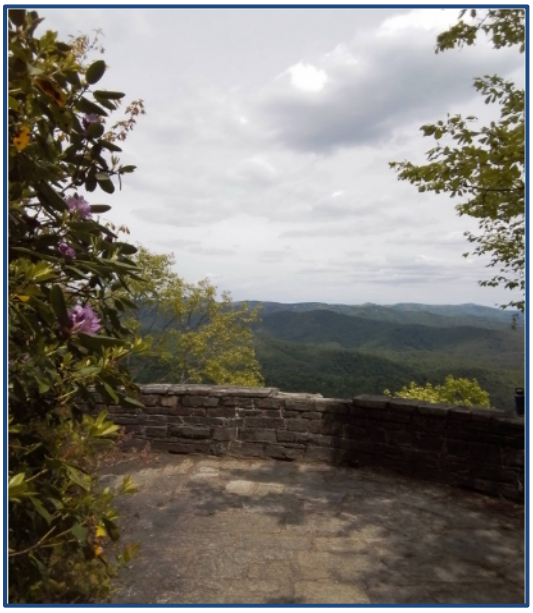
260.3 | Jumpinoff Rocks Parking Area



Description: *Jumpinoff Rocks Parking Area* is an expansive, panoramic view that highlights a series of heavily forested ridges and valleys. The view is framed by deciduous trees in the foreground. The view is somewhat unique compared to other viewsheds on the Parkway with the strong framing making it more unique. Similarly to other viewsheds, ephemeral qualities include fall colors, migratory birds, and wildflowers. There is a large house in the middle ground that could be somewhat distracting for some viewers.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

260.3 | Jumpinoff Rocks Trail Viewpoint



Description: *Jumpinoff Rock Trail Viewpoint* is a short walk from the parking lot that allows for the viewer to stretch their legs to experience a classic, sweeping panoramic view of deep, expansive forested, rolling ridgelines. This view offers a unique opportunity for a more "immersive" feeling in the forested landscape and presents significant photo opportunities from the view of a level, secure rock outcropping. During various seasons, there may be blooming rhododendron and other wildflowers as well as the changing leaves in the fall. High-quality features and site conditions are present, along with clear focal framing of the view. This site provides a comforting forest feel with the consistent, predictable rolling landscapes.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**15**

264.4 | The Lump Overlook



Description: *The Lump Overlook* offers a stunning panoramic view overlooking a series of natural ridges and valleys. It is a well framed view with a variety of ridges and valleys to the Northwest and a view of Piedmont Plateau to the Northeast. The diversity of the viewpoint offers a range of textures and patchiness across the landscape. Fall colors will pop across the landscape due to a variety of deciduous and pine trees, with some in the foreground and others set in the background spanning the wide distances. The Lump Overlook further stands out since it is a large panorama view that boasts a minimally developed landscape, with a small dam and reservoir catching your eye without detracting from the beauty of this valley.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

264.4 | On Top of the Lump



Description: *On Top of the Lump* is an expansive view with several ridges and taller peaks in the background. This viewshed contains a diffused focal point with a series of forested ridges and harmonious trees in the middle ground which will form a colorful area during fall season. While there is a small empty area in the distance, this view is unique in comparison to other viewsheds due to the 360-degree view.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

266.8 | Mt. Jefferson



Description: The *Mt. Jefferson* view is medium in breadth with a few different patterns and colors of trees, making it a great spot to enjoy in the fall. While the ephemeral qualities other than fall colors were rare, the site was somewhat unique due to its connection to Mount Jefferson, making it an ideal sightseeing view for outdoor enthusiasts. The pastures complement this area. The addition of waysides would improve the viewing experience for visitors, increasing the site's view time to over 1 minute.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**9**

267.8 | Betseys Rock Falls



Description: *Betseys Rock Falls* is a feature view centered on a single ridge framed by surrounding trees. While the primary view is well framed, shifting the viewpoint slightly uphill reveals a more expansive perspective of multiple ridges extending into the distance. However, the falls are not visible. The site presents a heavily forested landscape with a moderate level of visual patterning. Undulating lines created by the main ridge and the layered ridges beyond add depth and movement. From the left side of the overlook, the distant ridgelines gradually dissolve into the soft blue haze characteristic of the Appalachian landscape. The ephemeral qualities were not frequent but predictable with examples of fall colors and flowering wild blackberries giving more life to the foreground. All parts of the scenery were in good shape with no visible damage or debris.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

270.2 | Lewis Fork Overlook



Description: *Lewis Fork Overlook* is a framed feature view of rolling ridgelines. Unique from other views is the textured framing of the forested foreground of classic Western North Carolina foliage, including spring blooms of blackberry bushes that will fruit at the height of the summer. Moderate levels of aesthetic variety from the forested canopy offer interesting visual diversity and a clearly framed landscape that still allows accessible ridgeline views and will provide a space for fall color changes to be seen in an intimate setting. This view can be accessed directly from a parking lot with moderate numbers of parking spaces, a few picnic table sites, and trash disposal opportunities.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

272.0 | Cascades Parking Area



Description: *Cascades Parking Area* offers a common experience compared to other views along the Parkway, with an expansive view that features several ridges, agricultural pastures, and a large, U-shaped valley in the distance. While the natural landscape is the focal point of this view, there are several farms and pastures in the middle ground. Both the natural and man-made features offer visual complexity that will encourage visitors to enjoy this stop for several minutes. The view is pleasantly framed by the trees, which encourages the viewer to focus on the number of valleys. The viewshed includes several picnic tables, including one that looks directly over the main view, further encouraging viewers to soak in this landscape.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**14**

274.3 | Elk Mountain Overlook



Description: *Elk Mountain Overlook* is dominated by a panoramic 180-degree view of ridges and valleys, with one end defined by a dominant ridge that descends into smaller ridgelines on the other side. This composition maximizes the sense of scale, giving the viewer a strong perception of dimension. Expansive forests, exposed bald areas, sparse residential development, pastures, and the distant presence of Rock Craggy Mountain add variety to the scene, making the view particularly engaging. Subtle human influences are present, but they contribute to the identity of the landscape. The overlook would be especially compelling during fall foliage or snow-covered seasons, both of which enhance the character. Some foreground maintenance would contribute to the ability to see more middle ground and background elements.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**14**

277.3 | Stoney Fork Overlook



Description: *Stoney Fork Overlook* offers a wide view, making it an intimate and easy viewing spot. The site has various patterns and colors of trees as well as ridges blended in together, making a perfect spot during fall, with potential warm and colorful fall leaves.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**11**

277.9 | Osborne Mountain



Description: The *Osborne Mountain* view presents a panoramic landscape of a meadow, a wall of trees, and multiple distant ridges. Although bordered by trees, the landscape still feels expansive and open. A rich variety of colors and patterns can be seen throughout the scene, including sun-washed colors, different shades of green, diagonal lines formed by tree trunks, flat meadow surfaces, and rounded tree shapes. There was little positive human-influenced content visible in the area and ***it appeared that a new housing development may be proceeding in the near future on the nearby ridge, which is central to the view.*** It was also unclear where the main feature, Osborne Mountain, was located, so additional signage or a map identifying the mountain could help visitors better appreciate the landscape.

Criteria	**Viewshed Score**
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0* (see narrative)
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

277.9 | Deep Gap View



Description: *Deep Gap*, which is across from the Osborne Mountain Overlook offers a feature view of a commercial crossroads. It is highly developed with a Christmas tree farm covering the northwestern hillside and a small housing development visible in the foreground. The fenceline serves as a visible separation between the public access for visitors along the Parkway contrasted with the private land beyond the fence. There is potential for changing colors in the fall to cover the hillside, but the developed nature of the area detracts from any natural beauty. In the foreground of the view is Highway 421 and beyond the highway a powerline stretches across the rolling hills.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	-5
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	0
Vividness	0
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**0**

278.3 | Carroll Gap Overlook



Description: *Carroll Gap Overlook* is a panoramic view of a rural valley with a variety of agriculture and woodlands. A level view of a Christmas tree farm scene provides a glimpse of local farming culture, a driver of the local economy. The variety of shapes and types of trees provides a textured view that will pop in the fall. The rhododendron shrubbery in the foreground will brighten the view during flowering season. There is a ridgeline in the background. Even with a line of trees that block the roadway tucked in the valley, there is still a visible cell tower, some powerlines, and a residential home in the midground. Nonetheless, this viewpoint offers an opportunity to revel in the multi-use space that exists beyond the Parkway borders.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	0
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	-3
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	0
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**3**

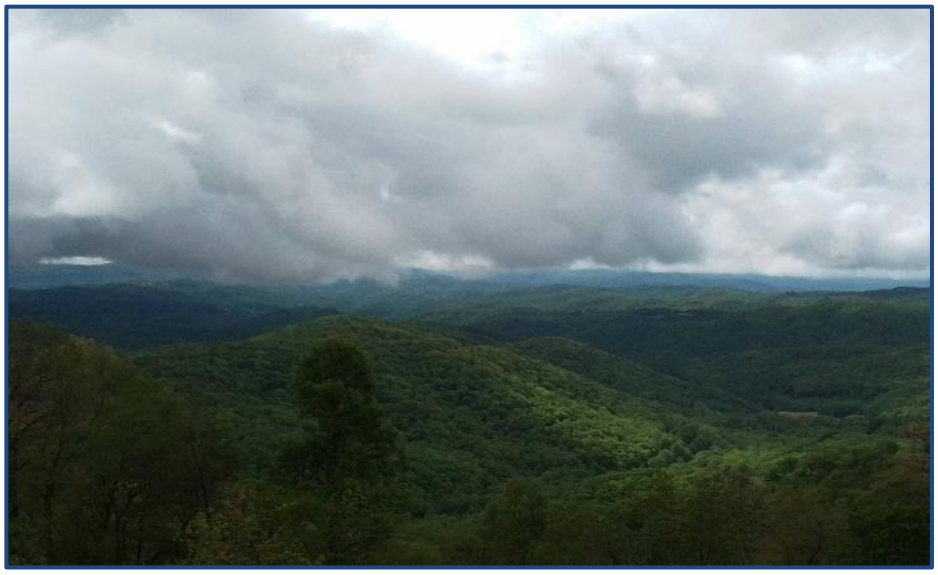
289.5 | Raven Rocks Overlook



Description: *Raven Rocks Overlook* boasts a panorama overlooking several ridges with a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees. The rustic wooden fence offsets the lush green background, and the rocky outcroppings slightly beyond the fence line provide a welcome texture variant. As you look over the ridges, open pastures and residential homes catch your eye. The homes are tastefully placed, and if you're lucky, you may hear the whistle of a train that runs approximately every hour. During the spring and early summer, the Magnolia trees bloom, and as the weather shifts in the fall, the leaves will turn vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow, painting the ridgelines in warm colors.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**14**

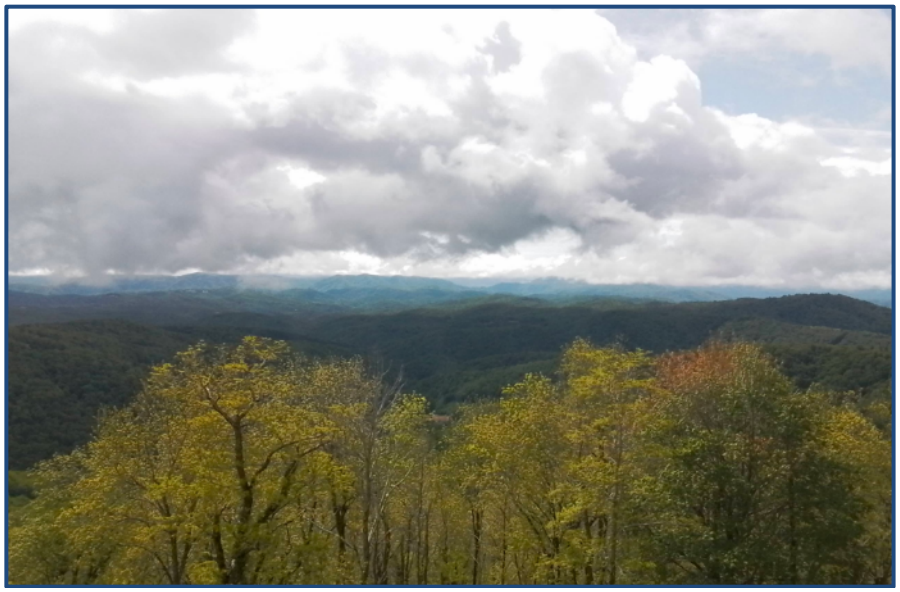
289.8 | Yadkin Valley Overlook



Description: *Yadkin Valley Overlook* offers a pleasant panoramic view of layered ridges and valleys, with clearly defined foreground, middle ground, and background elements that create strong depth across the landscape. Thick forest cover dominates the scene, while clouds in the distance add visual character to the mountain setting. Although houses and roads are present within the landscape, they are well camouflaged within the forest and do not significantly affect the natural scenic quality. Ephemeral features such as fall colors, bird activity, wildflowers, and changing cloud patterns further enhance the experience. A small open patch is visible in part of the viewshed, and additional tree cover in this area could further improve the overall visual continuity of the scene.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**15**

290.4 | Thunder Hill Overlook



Description: *Thunder Hill Overlook* offers a sweeping glimpse into the classic character of the deep rolling ridgelines of the Blue Ridge Parkway. With deciduous trees framing the view, distinct textures and opportunities for fall color changes are directly in the forefront of harmonious green rolling hills and a deep perspective of what gives the area the namesake of "Blue Ridge." A day of overcast weather provided changing framing and added to the dynamic viewing of natural landscapes. No evidence of human impact is present in the frame, and the elements are of high quality and condition. Overall, a quality stop but not particularly notable compared to other views along the Parkway.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**10**

294.0 | Moses Cone Carriage Barn



Description: The view at *Moses Cone Carriage Barn* offers a feature view centered on a single prominent ridge and valley, creating a simple yet visually appealing mountain scene. Thick forest cover dominates the landscape, while a few distant houses are visible but blend reasonably well into the surroundings. Seasonal features such as fall colors and bird activity add life and natural interest to the view, and the prominent ridge serves as a strong focal point that enhances the scenic character of the overlook. Fencing and plant-trestles in the foreground and distant power lines do not reduce the overall visual quality of the viewshed.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**11**

294.0 | Flat Top Manor Front Porch



Description: The view from *Flat Top Manor Front Porch* is like stepping back in time as you gaze across a wide view that includes a pond and forested rolling hills. Although there is some residential development, it is dispersed and not highly visible, letting viewers imagine what the residents of the Manor House would have looked out on during their residency. Visitors can indulge further by sitting in a rocking chair and immersing themselves in the view for as long as they would like in the shade and breeze.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

294.6 | Bass Lake (off Shoals Mill Rd to US 321)



Description: Although the *Bass Lake* is a narrow view, its vibrant colors and diverse patterns and textures offset its small size. In addition, positive human-made features like the wooden bench facing the lake provide a more immersive experience to visitors by allowing them to sit in the calmness of the lake and enjoy the sight of ducks and their families roaming around. The reflection of fall colors in the lake itself will be a spectacular feature. While this area seemed to be a little more commercialized, with high vividness because of the various natural features like dark green lily flowers on the water body, the presence of birds, and valleys, some distracting and incongruent features such as the observation platform over the lake and the goose poop around the lake may affect visitor experience.

Criteria	**Viewshed Score**
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	2
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

295.3 | Sims Creek Overlook



Description: *Sims Creek Overlook* offers a feature view of one ridge with a variety of trees including ones with striking white blooms. The rhododendron has overtaken the foreground in the parking area, but head south towards the bridge and the brush will clear and offer a nice view of Sims Creek below. If you are looking for a brief stroll, head down the Sims Creek Trail for an up-close view of the creek but do take note that the trail may have large step-ups and places where the roots protrude along the path. Listen quietly and enjoy the chirping of the migratory birds alongside the gently flowing stream.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	0
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	0
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	0
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	0
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**4**

295.9 | Sims Pond Overlook



Description: The *Sims Pond Overlook* showcases a quaint pond and channel view with a mixed forest backdrop. There are a charming bridge and a short trail that takes the viewer directly down to the pond, in addition to the viewing spot right off the parking lot. This viewshed is a prime spot to view wildlife such as waterfowl and wading birds, fish, turtles, and small mammals. Sims Pond is a unique stop on the Blue Ridge Parkway, as visitors can enjoy the view but also get an up-close look at the water feature.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	2
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

296.4 | Price Picnic Area



Description: *Price Picnic Area* is uniquely situated along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and its view includes themes of mountain character, recreation, and outdoor engagement. Recreational infrastructure contributes to visual cues of connection between communities, friends, and family. The viewshed includes streams, pastures, forests, mature trees, and stream barriers, all of which create personal, up-close interactions with the regional landscape and encourage outdoor exploration. Elements establish a balance between recreation and natural settings.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**12**

296.7 | Price Lake Overlook



Description: *Price Lake Overlook* is a panoramic view of the lake, where dense forest surrounds the water. Beautiful reflections of the forest can be seen across the lake's surface. The rounded shape of the point and the smooth texture of the water, alongside its gentle ripples, add to the peaceful atmosphere. Because of the bordering trees, it is easy for viewers to find a focal point within the landscape. The shoreline and flowering trees further enhance the scenery. Wildlife, including birds and reptiles such as water snakes, add life to the landscape. There is a 2.3-mile trail (Price Lake Trail) that offers opportunities to view the lake from different angles and enjoy the surrounding rhododendrons. Overall, it can be considered a unique view along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	2
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

297.1| Lakeview Overlook (boat rental parking area)



Description: *Lakeview Overlook* offers a beautiful, panoramic view of Price Lake, surrounded by deciduous and coniferous forest in the middle ground and a ridge in the background. After a short walk down some stairs, visitors can enjoy this view and even spot wildlife such as wading birds and turtles, in addition to others. It is worth noting that this viewshed requires some maintenance in the foreground, as some unmanaged brush may distract from the overall view. Otherwise, this area is in wonderful condition and will be a stunning area to visit, especially during the fall or when trees are flowering in the spring.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	2
Positive human-influenced content	1
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**16**

303.9 | Yonahlossee Overlook



Description: *Yonahlossee Overlook* is a vibrant, panoramic view with several ridges and natural valleys featuring colorful pea and dark green trees, which make it a picturesque spot, especially during fall when the different types of trees will turn a variety of colors. The combination of the coniferous, deciduous forest, cliffs, and melodious sounds of migratory birds make it a one-of-a-kind view with high vividness that will capture visitors' attention, increasing their viewing time to longer than three minutes.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	2
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**17**

305.2 | Beacon Heights Parking Area



Description: *Beacon Heights Parking Area* offers a unique perspective of the backside of Grandfather Mountain. The presence of the Parkway in the foreground creates an engaging interaction between the natural landscape and the shared human experience of enjoying these public spaces at both the state and federal levels. Expansive mountain scenery, established wildlife habitats, and strong seasonal variation make the area especially compelling at any time of year. Migratory birds further enhance the ecological character of the scene, while limited infrastructure, including visible powerlines, remains present without overwhelming the overall visual or recreational experience. This is an encapsulating view of the harmonious interactions between wildlife, nature, and human experience.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**9**

305.2 | Beacon Heights SW Rock Outcrop



Description: *Beacon Heights SW Rock Outcrop* is a short half-mile walk up to a stunning panorama overlooking a series of natural ridges and valleys. A large rock outcropping offers plenty of room for visitors to spread out, and the variety of boulders of varying shapes and sizes provide fun for everyone to scramble around. As you take in the view, the rolling hills have a variety of tree types and textures, and the layers of ridges paint a beautiful picture. Embrace this sea of green with varying colors, and the unique Table Mountain view. To the Southwest there is a cell tower on top of Grandmother Mountain, which unfortunately detracts from the natural beauty of this panorama.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	-3
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**9**

305.2 | Beacon Heights SE



Description: The *Southeast* view from *Beacon Heights* provides sweeping views of layers upon layers of ridges with a fun, rocky foreground providing variety and texture to the experience. There is little in the way of human-created content in the view, allowing visitors to have a contemplative moment on this rocky outcrop. As with so many locations along the Blue Ridge Parkway, this view will be gorgeous in the fall when the layers of ridges turn aflame with color. Although this is a similar view to others along the parkway, the short hike and rocky outcrops add a flavor that makes it stand out as more unique than those directly adjacent to road pull-outs.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**13**

305.2 | Beacon Heights NE Grandfather



Description: After a 0.5 mi or so hike, visitors walk to the far end of flat rock to experience the *Beacon Heights NE Grandfather* view - an incredible, 360-degree view with Grandfather Mountain in front of them and an expansive series of ridges and valleys behind them. This view is also scattered with huge spruces and pines, as well as deciduous and coniferous forests. Specifically, the cedar and pine trees nicely frame the view of Grandfather Mountain to the northeast. The Beacon Heights Overlook NE is off a cliff, which creates a stunning view from all sides. Viewers could easily spend up to an hour sitting on the rocks and soaking in this incredible view.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**15**

306.6 | Grandfather Mountain Parking Overlook



Description: *Grandfather Mountain Parking Overlook* provides a view of the iconic mountain. A beautiful frame of green trees and bushes draws attention toward the mountain. The vegetation becomes more sporadic toward the top, adding variety to the forms and textures within the landscape. The foreground consists of a lush forest with various trees, including pines and shrubs. The overall condition of the landscape appears well maintained. Ephemeral qualities of the view include seasonal fall colors, birds, and wildflowers. Since many Parkway viewsheds consist primarily of forest-covered ridges, Grandfather Mountain offers a somewhat unique and recognizable view. The average viewer would likely spend more than three minutes observing the landscape because of the mountain's distinct and iconic natural presence.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**12**

307.6 | Little Bald Overlook



Description: This overlook focuses on *Little Bald*, a mountain bald. While visually appealing, the feature is partially obscured by surrounding trees and coverage, limiting its overall focus in the scene. The view expands into layered ridges and valleys, with visible snags and trees in the foreground contributing to both viewer engagement and potential wildlife habitat. Migratory birds and seasonal variation enrich the experience, with snow-covered mountaintops, fall foliage, and spring flowering adding seasonal dimension changes. The foreground, however, could benefit from light maintenance and selective dead brush clearing to improve visibility and strengthen the overall composition of the viewshed.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	0
Total Score	**7**

308.3 | Flat Rock Parking Area



Description: *Flat Rock Parking Area* presents a panoramic view of layered ridges and valleys, creating a scenic mountain landscape with strong depth and natural character. Trees in the foreground partially block sections of the view, limiting some long-distance visibility. Natural features such as the exposed flat rock, nearby cliff edges, and surrounding forest add visual interest and make this overlook unique. Distant pastures and farms blend relatively well with the landscape. Ephemeral features such as fall colors, bird sounds, and wildflowers further enhance the experience. One noticeable incongruent feature is a golf course visible in the middle ground, which slightly interrupts the otherwise natural setting. This viewpoint was accessed after hiking approximately half a mile.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	-3
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**9**

310.0 | Lost Cove Cliffs Parking Overlook



Description: *Lost Cove Cliffs* is a panoramic view overlooking a series of natural ridges and valleys. The large meadow offers ample room for people to spread out in the foreground to enjoy the mix of pine and deciduous trees in the middle ground. Shadowed in the background are layers of ridgelines which could be better highlighted by some maintenance and clearing of the towering trees in the foreground. The wayside features the Appalachian lore of the 'Brown Mountain Lights' which is a unique feature that could be further elaborated on with interpretive information. The Lost Cove Cliffs are barely visible looking into the southern end of the lot, but with some maintenance, the beauty and name of this place could be restored as an interesting and quirky stopping point for visitors.

Criteria	Viewshed Score
Viewshed Size	1
Variety/Visual Complexity	1
Harmony/Organization	1
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	1
Quality/Condition	1
Vividness	1
Est. duration of viewing	1
Total Score	**8**

No Mileage Post | Erwin's Viewpoint of Linville Falls: viewed from USFS land



Description: *Erwin's Viewpoint of Linville Falls* offers a breathtaking view accessed by a one-mile hiking trail from the Linville Falls Parking Area. This panoramic view of the falls also features a dense, mixed forest and calming views of the water. This site is visually complex and a completely unique feature of the parkway. With no human influence or infrastructure, Erwin's Viewpoint allows visitors to feel completely immersed in the environment around them, allowing them to soak up this one-of-a-kind scene. Not far from this view is an overlook of the river, another beautiful overlook on this trail. The overlook is in perfect condition, with high visual complexity and harmonious views.

Criteria	**Viewshed Score**
Viewshed Size	2
Variety/Visual Complexity	2
Harmony/Organization	2
Ephemeral qualities	1
Positive human-influenced content	0
Incongruent/Distracting	0
Uniqueness	2
Quality/Condition	2
Vividness	2
Est. duration of viewing	2
Total Score	**15**

VI. Summary

In conclusion, over five days, the 2026 Gary Everhart Park Break Fellows and affiliated faculty conducted 59 viewshed analyses along a 116-mile segment of the Blue Ridge Parkway between mile markers 202 and 317.5. Viewshed evaluation criteria and methods were collaboratively adapted in conjunction with the primary community partner, Blue Ridge Foundation, based on Miller et al. (2024) and the NPS Visual Resource Inventory (Peters et al., 2018; Sullivan & Meyer, 2016). For each viewshed, a combination of quantitative scoring and qualitative descriptors helped to distinguish the overall quality of each designated viewshed, with a final "ranked order" of each assessed viewshed (Appendix B & C). Three photos of each viewshed were captured, alongside a final descriptive write-up and a site-specific scoring table, intending to assist the community partner with viewshed maintenance prioritization and dispersion of visitors along the parkway. The final viewshed database was shared with community partners, alongside recommendations on how to perform the analysis independently.

The Park Break team concluded that the adapted viewshed assessment tool was a user-friendly, appropriate tool for both managers and researchers alike. This tool can help to bolster and leverage aesthetic qualities of parks and protected areas (PPA) in an objective manner, adding unique elements to existing biological, ecological, or cultural assessments currently used by managers. While the tool may be used to support the protection of areas from incongruent development or deforestation, it can also help managers of viewsheds prioritize and disperse visitors to "less appreciated" views, or to decide where to place existing maintenance resources.

The team would like to extend its gratitude to individuals and organizations that helped support and make this research experience successful. Thank you to George Ivey and Carolyn Widner from the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation and Blue Ridge Rising for their generous funding and assistance in developing the assessment tool, selecting viewshed sites, and making this project possible. Thank you to the Clemson University Institute for Parks, the George Wright Society, and the Gary Everhart Park Break Program for their coordination, mentorship, and networking opportunities. And lastly, an immense thank you to the faculty facilitators, Bob Powell, Ryan Sharp, and Lauren Stephens, for their time, positive energy, patience, and willingness to champion this program. Your dedication to the development of graduate students in the field is sincerely noticed and we are incredibly grateful for the learning and community milestones we shared together.

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Appendix A | Viewshed Analysis Instrument

Viewshed MP and name:		Evaluator(s):	
Criteria	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Viewshed Size: reflects both the relative width (degrees) and the number of depth zones (foreground, middle ground, and background) associated with the viewshed (Miller et al., 2024). How wide is the viewshed? How many distance zones are present?	2: Panoramic view (180 degrees or greater) that is unobstructed and includes all distance zones (foreground, middle ground, and background)	1: Approximately 90 degrees wide view with only foreground and middle ground depths represented.	0: Limited: Very narrow view with only foreground depth.
Variety and Visual Complexity: reflects the variation in the visual characteristics of the landscape including patterns, color, form, line, textures, and vegetation (e.g., Kaplan, Kaplan, & Ryan, 1998; Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). How much variation in the visual characteristics of the landscape (patterns, color, form, line and textures) and vegetation?	2: High levels of patterns, forms, ridges, lines, textures and a sense of depth.	1: Moderate level of patterns, forms, ridges, lines, textures, and depth.	0: Low levels of variety and visual complexity.
Harmony/Organization-Coherence and Legibility: of a viewshed pertains to the visual composition, spatial relationships, and scale relationships that reflect the framing of the view, the presence of a focal point, and degree of harmonious land uses associated with natural and traditional pastoral views. ***Coherence*** refers to how well a view is visually organized, structured, and makes sense, allowing for immediate understanding. Key elements include repetition of elements, structural order, and harmony. ***Legibility*** refers to how easy it is to visually navigate with landmarks, a focal point, and edges/framing.	2: High-Includes high levels of visual composition, including framing or edges that define and focus the view, a focal point, and is understandable and harmonious. An example is a valley view defined by two ridges that orient the eye and provide a focal point towards the head of the valley. The land use is also harmonious with the surroundings and understandable.	1: Moderate-may contain framing or a focal point but is more diffused. Visual composition provides some coherence and legibility.	0: Low-No visual focal point, landmarks, or framing. Difficult to assess spatial relationships and scale.
Ephemeral qualities refer to features in the foreground and middle ground such as seasonal elements including fall foliage colors, wildflower blooms, and pastoral variations such as crops and livestock (Miller et al., 2024).	2: Frequent/predictable	1: Not frequent but predictable	0: Not predictable
Positive human-influenced content in the viewshed include traditional and historic land uses that complement the natural landscape (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024).	2: Striking-visually appealing and that is harmonious with the natural and historic character.	1: Noticeable but not visually striking; somewhat appealing and harmonious with the natural and historic character.	0: Not visible

Viewshed MP and name:		Evaluator(s):	
Criteria	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Incongruent or distracting content in a viewshed include human infrastructure and land uses such as powerlines, mines, and junkyards that distract from or degrade the traditional and natural views and generally occur in the foreground or middle ground (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller et al., 2024). This variable is more heavily weighted because of the theoretical negative impact that discordant content in a viewshed can have on the visitor experience.	-5: Highly visible and large in scale with the potential of multiple discordant land uses.	-3: Visible but small in scale.	0: Not visible
Uniqueness reflects the relative and comparative distinctness of the viewshed as compared to all other viewsheds available in a geographic area.	2: Completely unique; one of a kind view.	1: Somewhat unique (similar to other views but has a unique perspective or element)	0: Common or similar to other views.
Quality and Condition: measures both the perceived health of the natural elements and the perceived condition of built landscape elements (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021).	2: Most elements are of high quality and in good/healthy condition and free of debris and trash.	1: Most elements are in fair condition. Some natural elements do not look healthy, have some damage, or debris.	0: Most elements are in poor condition, natural elements look unhealthy, damaged, or in poor condition, and the built environment is poorly maintained and/or is in disrepair.
Estimated duration of viewing reflects the estimated time that visitors will view, engage, or utilize the viewshed (Miller et al., 2024).	2: Greater than 3 minutes	1: 1-3 Minutes	0: Less than 1 minute
Vividness is an overall ranking and reflects the viewshed's "wow factor." Considerations include the scoring related to the size, variety and complexity, harmony and organization, uniqueness, and ephemeral qualities, as well as quality and condition of landscape elements (Meyer, Taylor, & Palmer, 2021; Miller, et al., 2024).	2: Vivid, high scores on 4 of 6 of the characteristics listed.	1: Somewhat vivid-high scores on 2/characteristics.	0: No wow at all, forgettable, and/or a good place to let the trees grow up and block the view.

3 Photos of Viewshed: Please submit (upload) up to three photos of the exact view.

Photo file name	Location	Compass Direction	Angle of view
#1			
#2			
#3			

Blue Ridge Types:

There are specific character views in the Blue Ridge area, identified by researchers, that mix focal, feature, detail and panoramic qualities. **Circle** one that most reflects the viewshed.

1. A focal view of a river, stream, or moving water
2. A feature view of a pond or lake
3. A panorama with several ridges
4. A panorama view of a rural valley with a variety agriculture and woodlands
5. A level view of a farm scene
6. A panorama looking into a developed valley
7. A panorama looking at a series of natural ridges and valleys
8. A feature view of one ridge
9. A feature view of a cultural resource like Puckett's cabin, etc.
10. A feature or detailed view of a natural resource
11. A level view of residential development
12. A focal or feature view of a commercial crossroads

Viewshed Scenic Quality: Describe elements within the view.

Distinctive natural features: What geographic or natural features dominate the viewshed? Is there an individual mountain or a series of ridges? Are there details such as rock outcrops or cliffs? Is there forest, pasture, or crop ground cover? Are there water features such as falls, lakes, streams, wetlands, or the ocean?

Positive manmade features: Are there any historical, cultural, or built structures in the viewshed that enhance your appreciation of the view? These might include historic built structures? Examples might include roads, bridges, rural barns, or other outbuildings. Is it an urban view with residential or commercial structures present?

Ephemeral features: Are there changing visual characteristics that occur on a regular basis, e.g., seasonal color of vegetation, farm animals in a pasture, presence of wild animals or waterfowl, etc.?

Incongruent or distracting features: Do any elements detract from the scenic beauty of the vista? Can you see power lines, billboards, junkyards, cell phone towers, or other distracting infrastructure in the viewshed?

Appendix B | Viewshed Scoring by Milepost

Unique ID	MP	Name	Size	Variety-Complex	Coherence-Legibility	Ephemeral qualities	Positive human-influenced	Incongruent	Unique	Quality-Condition	Duration	Vividness	Score
202801	202.8	Granite Quarry Overlook	2	1	1	1	1	-5	0	2	0	1	4
203901	203.9	Piedmont Overlook	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	11
203902	203.9	Piedmont Overlook (Agriculture scene)	1	2	0	2	1	-3	2	2	1	1	9
213001	213	Blue Ridge Music Center Amphitheater	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	12
217501	217.5	Cumberland Knob Picnic Area	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	7
218601	218.6	Fox Hunter's Paradise Parking Overlook	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	12
218602	218.6	Fox Hunter's Paradise Trail Viewpoint	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
230101	230.1	Little Glade Mill Pond	0	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	13
232501	232.5	Stone Mountain Overlook	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
233701	233.7	Bullhead Mountain Overlook	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
235001	235	Mahogany Rock Overlook	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
235701	235.7	Devil's Garden Park Overlook	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	11
236901	236.9	Air Bellows Gap Overlook	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	11
238501	238.5	Brinegar Cabin	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	1	12
240601	240.6	Low Notch Overlook Northview (No Name Parking Area)	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	13
240601	240.6	Low Notch Overlook (aka No Name Parking Area)	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	7
241101	241.1	Wildcat Rocks Overlook	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	17
241102	241.1	Doughton Park - Picnic Area (picnic area road closed as of 5/6)	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	2	1	14
242401	242.4	Alligator Back Parking Area Viewpoint	2	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	13

Unique ID	MP	Name	Size	Variety-Complex	Coherence-Legibility	Ephemeral qualities	Positive human-influenced	Incongruent	Unique	Quality-Condition	Duration	Vividness	Score
242402	242.4	Alligator Back Parking Area View Back Across Parkway	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	11
243401	243.4	Bluff Mountain	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	15
244701	244.7	Basin Cove Overlook NNE	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	8
244702	244.7	Basin Cove Overlook SE	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	8
252801	252.8	Sheets Gap Parking Area SE	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
252802	252.8	Sheets Gap Parking Area SW	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	6
260301	260.3	Jumpinoff Rocks Parking Area	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
260302	260.3	Jumpinoff Rock Trail Viewpoint	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
264401	264.4	The Lump Overlook	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
264402	264.4	On top of the Lump	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
266801	266.8	Mt Jefferson	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	9
267801	267.8	Betseys Rock Falls	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
270201	270.2	Lewis Fork Overlook	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	10
272001	272.0	Cascades Parking Area	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	1	14
274301	274.3	Elk Mountain Overlook	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	14
277301	277.3	Stoney Fork Overlook	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	11
277901	277.9	Deep Gap View	2	1	1	1	0	-5	0	0	0	0	0
277902	277.9	Osborne Mountain View	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	10
278301	278.3	Carroll Gap Overlook	2	2	0	1	0	-3	0	1	0	0	3
289501	289.5	Raven Rocks Overlook	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	2	14
289801	289.8	Yadkin Valley Overlook	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
290401	290.4	Thunder Hill Overlook	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
294001	294	Moses Cone Carriage Barn	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	11

ID	MP	Name	Size	Variety-Complex	Coherence-Legibility	Ephemeral qualities	Positive human-influenced	Incongruent	Unique	Quality-Condition	Duration	Vividness	Score
294002	294	Flat Top Manor Front Porch	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
294602	294.6	Bass Lake (off Shoals Mill Rd to US 321)	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
295301	295.3	Sims Creek Overlook	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
295901	295.9	Sims Pond Overlook	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
296401	296.4	Price Picnic Area	1	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	12
296701	296.7	Price Lake Overlook	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
297101	297.1	Lakeview Overlook (boat rental parking area)	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
303901	303.9	Yonahlossee overlook	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	17
305201	305.2	Beacon Heights Parking lot	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	9
305202	305.2	Beacon Heights SW Rock Outcrop	2	2	2	1	0	-3	1	1	2	1	9
305203	305.2	Beacon Heights SE Rock Outcrop	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	13
305204	305.2	Beacon Heights NE (Grandfather view)	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
306601	306.6	Grandfather Mountain Parking Overlook	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	12
307601	307.6	Little Bald Overlook	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	7
308302	308.3	Flat Rock Parking Area	2	2	1	1	0	-3	1	2	2	1	9
310001	310	Lost Cove Cliffs Parking Overlook	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	8
316409	n/a	Erwin's Viewpoint of Linville Falls	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15

Appendix C | Viewshed Scores from Low to High

ID	MP	Name	Size	Variety-Complex	Coherence-Legibility	Ephemeral qualities	Positive human-influenced	Incongruent	Unique	Quality-Condition	Duration	Vivid	Score
277901	277.9	Deep Gap View	2	1	1	1	0	-5	0	0	0	0	0
252801	252.8	Sheets Gap Parking Area SE	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
235001	235	Mahogany Rock Overlook	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
278301	278.3	Carroll Gap Overlook	2	2	0	1	0	-3	0	1	0	0	3
202801	202.8	Granite Quarry Overlook	2	1	1	1	1	-5	0	2	0	1	4
295301	295.3	Sims Creek Overlook	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
252802	252.8	Sheets Gap Parking Area SW	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	6
217501	217.5	Cumberland Knob Picnic Area	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	7
240601	240.6	Low Notch Overlook (aka No Name Parking Area)	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	7
307601	307.6	Little Bald Overlook	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	7
244701	244.7	Basin Cove Overlook 2nd NNE	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	8
244702	244.7	Basin Cove Overlook SE	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	8
310001	310	Lost Cove Cliffs Parking Overlook	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	8
203902	203.9	Piedmont Overlook (Agriculture scene)	1	2	0	2	1	-3	2	2	1	1	9
266801	266.8	Mt Jefferson	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	9
305201	305.2	Beacon Heights Parking lot	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	9
305202	305.2	Beacon Heights SW Rock Outcrop	2	2	2	1	0	-3	1	1	2	1	9
308302	308.3	Flat Rock Parking Area	2	2	1	1	0	-3	1	2	2	1	9
232501	232.5	Stone Mountain Overlook	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
233701	233.7	Bullhead Mountain Overlook	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
260301	260.3	Jumpinoff Rocks Parking Area	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
267801	267.8	Betseys Rock Falls	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
270201	270.2	Lewis Fork Overlook	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	10

ID	MP	Name	Size	Variety-Complex	Coherence-Legibility	Ephemeral qualities	Positive human-influenced	Incongruent	Unique	Quality-Condition	Duration	Vivid	Score
277902	277.9	Osborne Mountain View	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	10
290401	290.4	Thunder Hill Overlook	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	10
203901	203.9	Piedmont overlook	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	11
235701	235.7	Devil's Garden Park Overlook	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	11
236901	236.9	Air Bellows Gap Overlook	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	11
242402	242.4	Alligator Back Parking Area View Back Across Parkway	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	11
277301	277.3	Stoney Fork Overlook	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	11
294001	294	Moses Cone Carriage Barn	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	11
213001	213	Blue Ridge Music Center Amphitheater	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	12
218601	218.6	Fox Hunter's Paradise Parking Overlook	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	12
238501	238.5	Brinegar Cabin	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	1	12
296401	296.4	Price Picnic Area	1	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	12
306601	306.6	Grandfather Mountain Parking Overlook	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	12
230101	230.1	Little Glade Mill Pond	0	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	13
240601	240.6	Low Notch Overlook Northview (aka No Name Parking Area)	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	13
242401	242.4	Alligator Back Parking Area Viewpoint	2	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	13
305203	305.2	Beacon Heights SE Rock Outcrop	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	13
241102	241.1	Doughton Park - Picnic Area (picnic area road closed as of 5/6)	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	2	1	14
272001	272.0	Cascades Parking Area	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	1	14
274301	274.3	Elk Mountain Overlook	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	14
289501	289.5	Raven Rocks Overlook	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	2	14
218602	218.6	Fox Hunter's Paradise Trail Viewpoint	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
243401	243.4	Bluff Mountain	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	15
260302	260.3	Jumpinoff Rock Trail Viewpoint	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15

ID	MP	Name	Size	Variety-Complex	Coherence-Legibility	Ephemeral qualities	Positive human-influenced	Incongruent	Unique	Quality-Condition	Duration	Vivid	Score
289801	289.8	Yadkin Valley Overlook	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
305204	305.2	Beacon Heights NE (Grandfather view)	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
316409	n/a	Erwin's Viewpoint of Linville Falls	2	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	15
264401	264.4	The Lump Overlook	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
264402	264.4	On top of the Lump	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
294002	294	Flat Top Manor Front Porch	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
294602	294.6	Bass Lake (off Shoals Mill Rd to US 321)	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
295901	295.9	Sims Pond Overlook	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
296701	296.7	Price Lake Overlook	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
297101	297.1	Lakeview Overlook (boat rental parking area)	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	16
241101	241.1	Wildcat Rocks Overlook	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	17
303901	303.9	Yonahlossee overlook	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	17