

The Talking Forest

Holmes Educational State Forest

Spring 2021

Rock Labyrinth

Did you know Holmes Educational State Forest has a rock labyrinth? Built in 2013 with the help of Four Circles Recovery Center, the “Bluebird” rock labyrinth has always been popular with children and visitors of all ages. Our labyrinth had begun sinking into the ground over the last eight years, but recently with the help of some enthusiastic volunteers, the labyrinth is being refreshed and restored to its former beauty.

One common misconception is that the word labyrinth is just another word for maze. Labyrinths are not mazes nor puzzles but rather meditations. Mazes may have multiple pathways, some of which are dead ends. The goal of a maze is to trick you into walking down the wrong path whereas labyrinths only have one path and contain no dead ends until you reach the center. These meditative designs have been around since prehistoric times and were used by various religious groups as devotional activities, minipilgrimages or as an atonement for sin. The Nordic Pagans utilized labyrinths to bring good fortune and reinforce protection. Today however, most folks walk labyrinths as a form of meditation. I feel

like most of our visitors end up walking the labyrinth out of curiosity and fascination.

Shout out to all the volunteers who have worked or are working on improvements to our rock labyrinth!

Joni Pavlik, Carrie Blair, Charlotte Broyles, Ray Pavlik and Jessica Rivers, thank you for all your hard work!



Photo taken by Susan Fay

Thank
You!

Visit all of North Carolina's State Forests.
From the mountains to the coast, we have 10 state forests
across this great land. Visit the [NCFS website](http://www.ncsf.org) for more information.

Holmes Educational State Forest

1299 Crab Creek Road

Hendersonville, NC 28739

828-692-0100

holmesesf.ncfs@ncagr.gov

Forest Hours:

Nov. 1 — end of February

Closed Mondays

Tuesday — Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed Saturday — Sunday

Closed State Holidays

March 1 — Oct. 31

Closed Mondays

Tuesday — Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday — Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Youth Group Campground:

April 1 — Oct. 31

(Currently closed)

Visit our website for more

Information.

www.ncsf.org/holmes.html

Susan Fay, ESF Supervisor

EJ Dwigans, Educational Ranger



Forest Improvements: Boardwalk Repairs and Informational Kiosk

We've been busy at work making improvements to our forest. Among days of mowing grass and blowing off trails, we have finished our kiosk near the office and have repaired the boardwalk railing previously damaged by a fallen tree.

In the coming months, look for signs of projects happening on the forest that include a new metal roof for the tree cookie and the installation of bat houses. The bat houses were part of an Eagle Scout project and included seven houses and a nice, professionally made sign. Our hope is to install the houses and the sign in the meadow above the public restrooms.



Photos taken by Susan Fay



Did you know, we have a history!?

Part I: Holmes started in the late 1930s as a tree nursery developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp P-66 out of Brevard. The camp was established in May 1935 and worked in the area until September 1940 when it moved to the Sandhills Land Use Area in Hoffman. While stationed at Holmes, originally called the Mountain Nursery, the CCC began developing the nursery's infrastructure in March 1938 by sowing 98 seed beds of White pine, Southern balsam, Yellow poplar, Black locust, Red spruce and Eastern hemlock. Next, the office, packing shed, storage depot and a 5-room nurseryman's cottage were constructed. By 1939, all structures and nursery beds were turned over to the state. Phillip Griffiths, the nursery's first appointed forester, and his family moved to the nursery in March 1940.



Holmes Nursery, July 1964, Crab Creek Rd on right



Photo taken by Susan Fay

By 1945, the nursery had been renamed J.S. Holmes Mountain Nursery after John Simcox Holmes, the N.C. Forest Service's first state forester. The nursery was growing seedlings on 12 acres of bottomland with the rest of the 219 acres dedicated to demonstration forest plantations and young forest growth. By this time, the nursery could produce 5-million seedlings per year.

Look for our next installment of "Did you know, we have a history!?" later this summer. It will cover 1950 through 1980.

Want to know more about Henderson County, North Carolina? Check out this book: ***Hidden History of Henderson County, North Carolina* by Terry Ruscin.** For more information about visiting Hendersonville, check out www.visithendersonvillenc.org. Also, listen to the latest ***"Travelogue" for a discussion about Holmes ESF.*** Special thanks to Melanie Black of Henderson County TDA!

Our Book Guide Selection for Spring

Spring is the season of wildflowers. From the beginning of March through late October, Holmes ESF blossoms with a wide variety wildflowers. Just like most visitors, staff need resource material to help with proper identification. The following are just a few resources that have helped us over the years.

- *Wild Flowers of North Carolina* by William S. Justice, C. Ritchie Bell and Anne H. Lindsey
- *Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail* by Leonard M. Adkins
- *Wildflowers and Plant Communities of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and Piedmont* by Timothy P. Spira
- *Wildflowers of the Smokies* by Peter White, Tom Condon, Janet Rock, Carol Ann McCormick, Pat Beaty, Keith Langdon

Fun Fact: Since the late 1980s, the **Western Carolina Botanical Club** has visited and logged most of the species found in Holmes ESF. Visit <https://wcbotanicalclub.org> for more information about the club and other fascinating information.



Photos taken by Susan Fay



Self-guided activities at Holmes ESF continue!

To date, our iNaturalist project, Holmes Educational State Forest Bioblitz!, has 185 observations that include 126 different species by 31 observers. Let's do more! This time of year is great for finding flowers, insects, birds and budding trees. For more information, visit the iNaturalist website at www.inaturalist.org. Click on "community" then "projects" and search for "Holmes Educational State Forest Bioblitz!".

Don't forget about ecoExplore. Earning points for badges and prizes can be rewarding but it's the time you'll spend outside exploring that makes this program great. Visit their website, www.ecoexplore.net, for more information and updates on their latest projects and events. Also, by clicking on the various badges, you can find fun facts and tips about any current subject.



Photo taken by Susan Fay

Current Badges:

Herpetology – June 1, 2021 – Aug. 31, 2021; Soil, Duck, Wildflower and ecoExplore bioblitz 2021



Ancient, old, and new labyrinths exist all over the world today. The Labyrinth Society maintains a searchable database, making it easy for you to find labyrinths close to you. The database can be found here: <https://labyrinthlocator.com/home>. *Photo taken by EJ Dwigans*

Look for our next newsletter during summer 2021.

