A walk through an old growth forest with some of the largest white pines in the region. Cross two streams, explore a lush fern glade and enjoy the forest understory largely populated with flame azaleas.

Natural History
Nestled amongst some of the world’s oldest mountains, located on the Atlantic Ocean side of the eastern continental divide, Brushy Face Preserve is home to diverse flora and fauna.

Old Growth: The forest along the stream, seemingly spared from loggers, contains white pines estimated to be over 200 years old! Also look for old growth hemlocks, sweet birch, tulp poplars, Frasers magnolia and red maples.

Fern Glade: New York and cinnamon ferns carpet this serene section of the preserve and are showiest in spring.

Botanicals and Wildlife: The Preserve is home to a number of plant and wildlife species, some rare and endangered. Flame azaleas welcome you at the trailhead, and the beautiful hooded and black-throated blue warblers provide important habitat for migratory birds including some creek crossings via rock hopping.

Stream Crossings and Old Roadbeds: The northern stream crossing rock hop was made from salvaged stones from the Hill House in Horse Cove. This historic private home was the residence of Highlands’ first mayor and the property is now conserved with HCLT. The stream is one of the main forks that become Clear Creek, which drains into Blue Valley and eventually the Chattooga River. A segment of the Brushy Face trail is constructed on an old road bed. The origin is not certain, but speculated to be remnants from the original Webb residence here.

Old and New: From the trailhead, look for views of Satulah Mountain Preserve, our first property conserved in 1909.

Difficulty: Moderate with gentle grade, some creek crossings via rock hopping.

Distance: 1.2 miles round trip, allow one hour for leisurely walk.

Prepare: Always tell someone where and when you are hiking. Bring water, rain gear and comfortable hiking shoes.

Hours: Dawn until dusk.

Rules: Stay on designated trails. No littering. No collecting or harming plants or wildlife. No hunting. No motorized vehicles or bicycles on trails. Be courteous to other hikers. Keep dogs on leash/under your direct control.

The People of Brushy Face
For the past century and a half, many of Highlands’ most colorful, engaged and prominent citizens have been drawn to this mountain’s rugged topography, scenic vistas and old growth flora. There is a fascinating history of long human involvement with the property, including those that called it home and fought to protect its natural attributes.

Civil War veteran Billy Webb was the first to settle here in 1875, the year Highlands was founded. He was able to eke out a subsistence living on the property, raise a large family and continue to play a role in Highlands’ history for generations.

A wealthy Atlanta woman, Eléonore Raoul, found rustic comfort and relaxation here from her urban pursuits of breaking the proverbial “glass ceiling” as a leading suffragist and pioneering law student; Raoul protected the land for almost half a century. Then a group of dedicated Floridians collectively preserved the land for another three decades.

Local homeowners once again came to the rescue. The Brushy Face Mountain Consortium was formed in 2011 and 75 acres were given to Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust in 2015 to be conserved in perpetuity!

Since taking ownership, HCLT’s AmeriCorps-led volunteers have built the entire trail by hand. To learn how you can volunteer, donate your land and support our efforts contact us at: info.hitrust@earthlink.net

Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT)
We are a nationally accredited, 501c3 non-profit land conservation organization that for 100 years has been strategically conserving our most ecologically vital lands for the benefit of all who live here.

Our work helps maintain clean water, healthy habitat for rare and endangered species as well as views and trails for health and recreation. Some of our conserved lands are open to the public such as this one. We rely on the support of people like you to continue our work of conserving some of the world’s oldest mountains. Please donate today. To join us, visit www.hicashlt.org.
BRUSHY FACE PRESERVE
HIGHLANDS, NORTH CAROLINA

White Pine (Pinus strobus) needles are evergreen 2.5 to 5 inches long, 5 in a bundle. The largest of conifers in the northeastern located in its most southern region.

Pineland
Private Road to Brushy Face

In the spring, the pine stalk turns cinnamon pink.

2 to 5’ High

Cinnamon Fern, Cunuma cinnamomeum, spotted in the Fern Glade, is a member of the Royal Fern Family.

Flame Azaleas, Rhododendron calendulaceum, grows 2 to 15 feet high & blooms various colors in the spring.

TRAILS
Big Pine Trail 4,340 ft. or .94 mile
West Fork Trail 6,056 ft. or 1.15 miles

A seep is a location where ground water slowly percolates to the surface.

Old growth White Pine, stop & enjoy.

Fern Glade Road
Clear Creek Road

Fern Glade is predominant with New York & Cinnamon Ferns

Clear Creek Watershed to Chattooga River, overflow of the Blue Valley Wilderness Study Area

Arriving from Highlands

Buddy Up!
Glenda Bell, stops to admire an old friend. Take a look up at this old growth White Pine. Notice the particularly large branching.

Dryer Hill Road
Notice the flat rocks.

Private Property

No parking

Street Parking & Brushy Face Trailhead

Continued your exploration

Street Parking

Private Road

Arriving from Highlands

Highway 28 (Guthrie Street)

Walsall Road

Old South