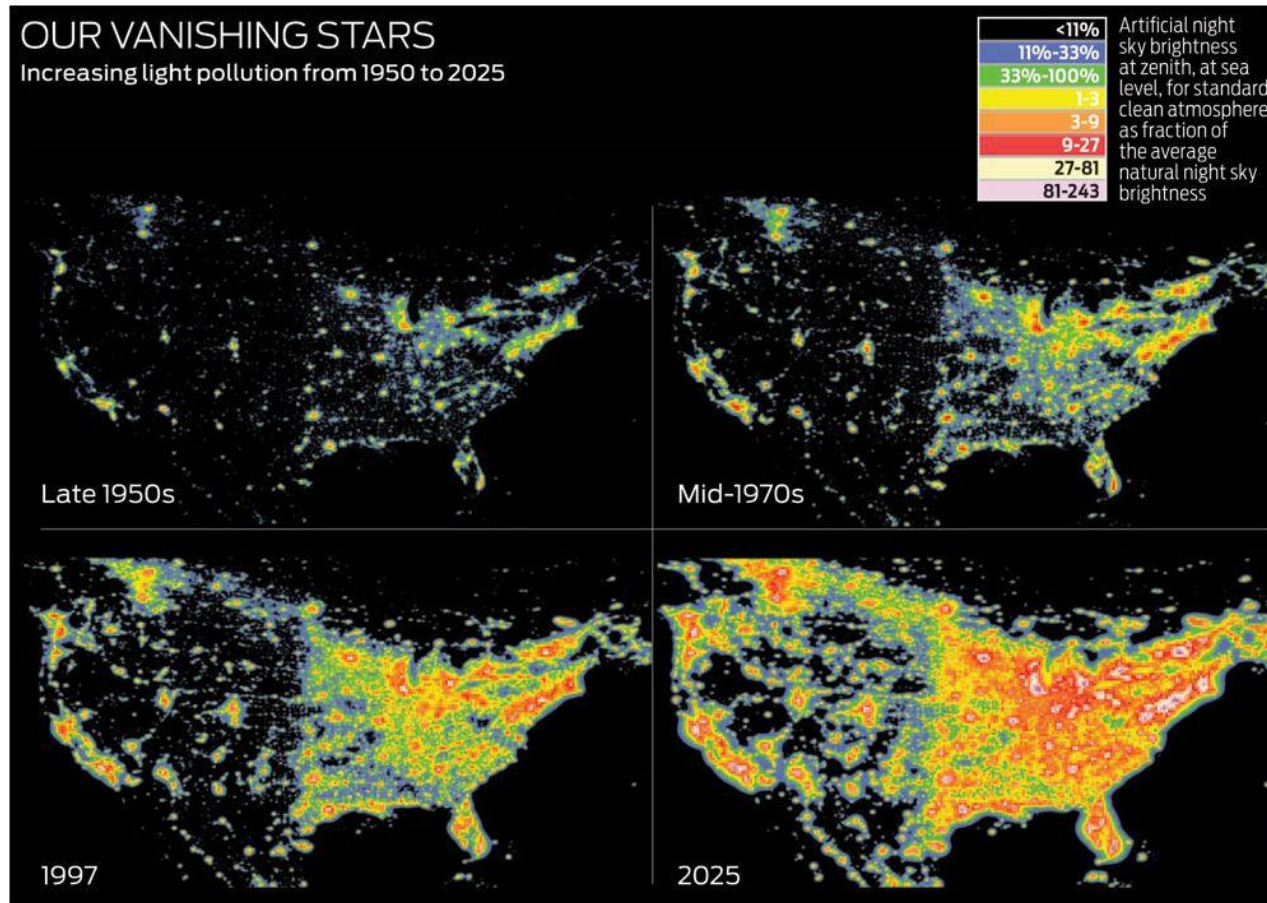


Dark Sky Observing Sites



Our Vanishing Stars





Gas Station/Restaurant (Closed) X

Blue Ridge Pkwy

X Gate to Picnic Area

X Bathrooms

X Bluffs Lodge Parking Lots (2)

Bluffs Lodge (Closed)

Wildcat Rock

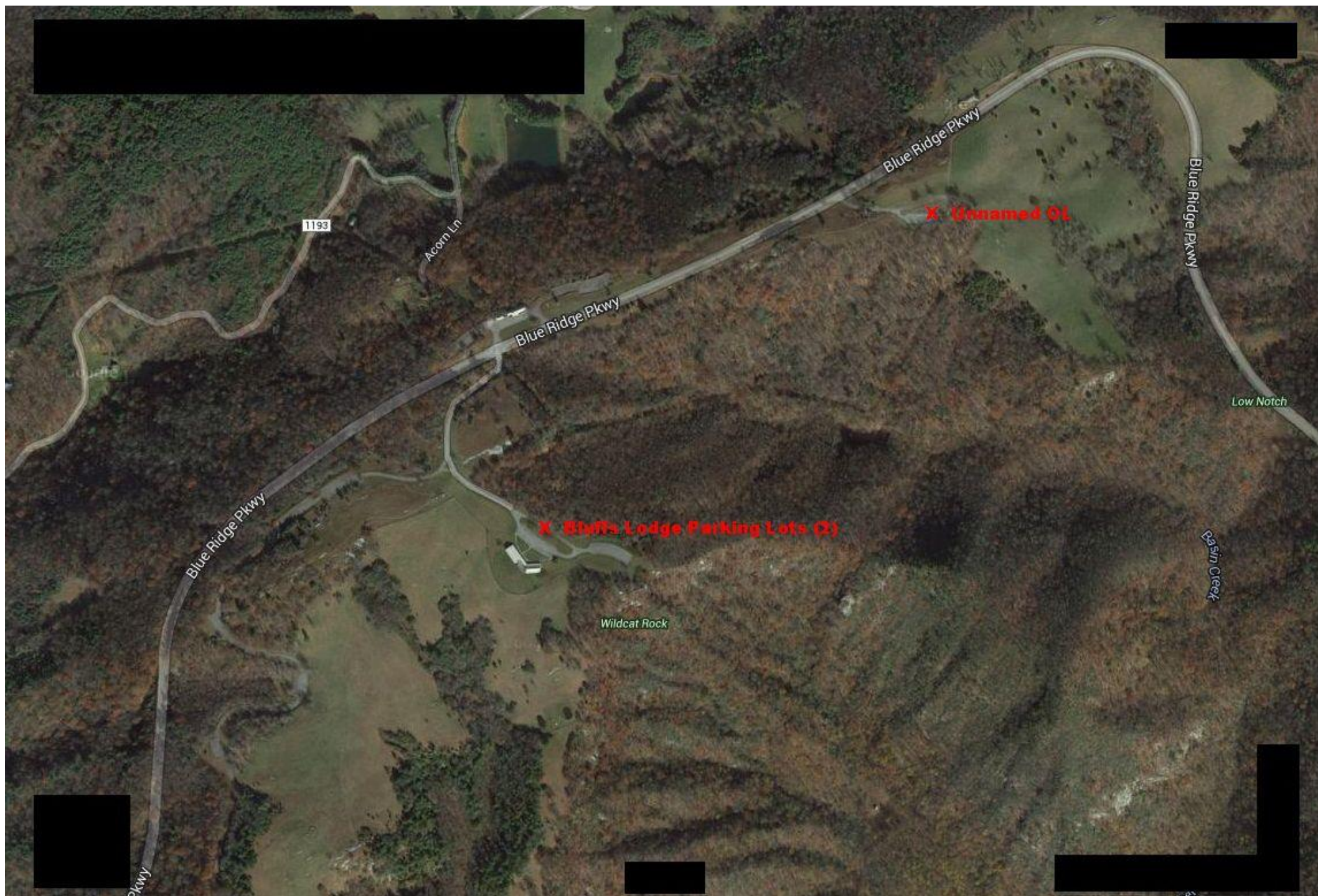
Blue Ridge Pkwy

X Bathrooms

Blue Ridge Pkwy

X Picnic Area Parking

Blue Ridge Pkwy



1193

Acorn Ln

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

X Unnamed OL

Low Notch

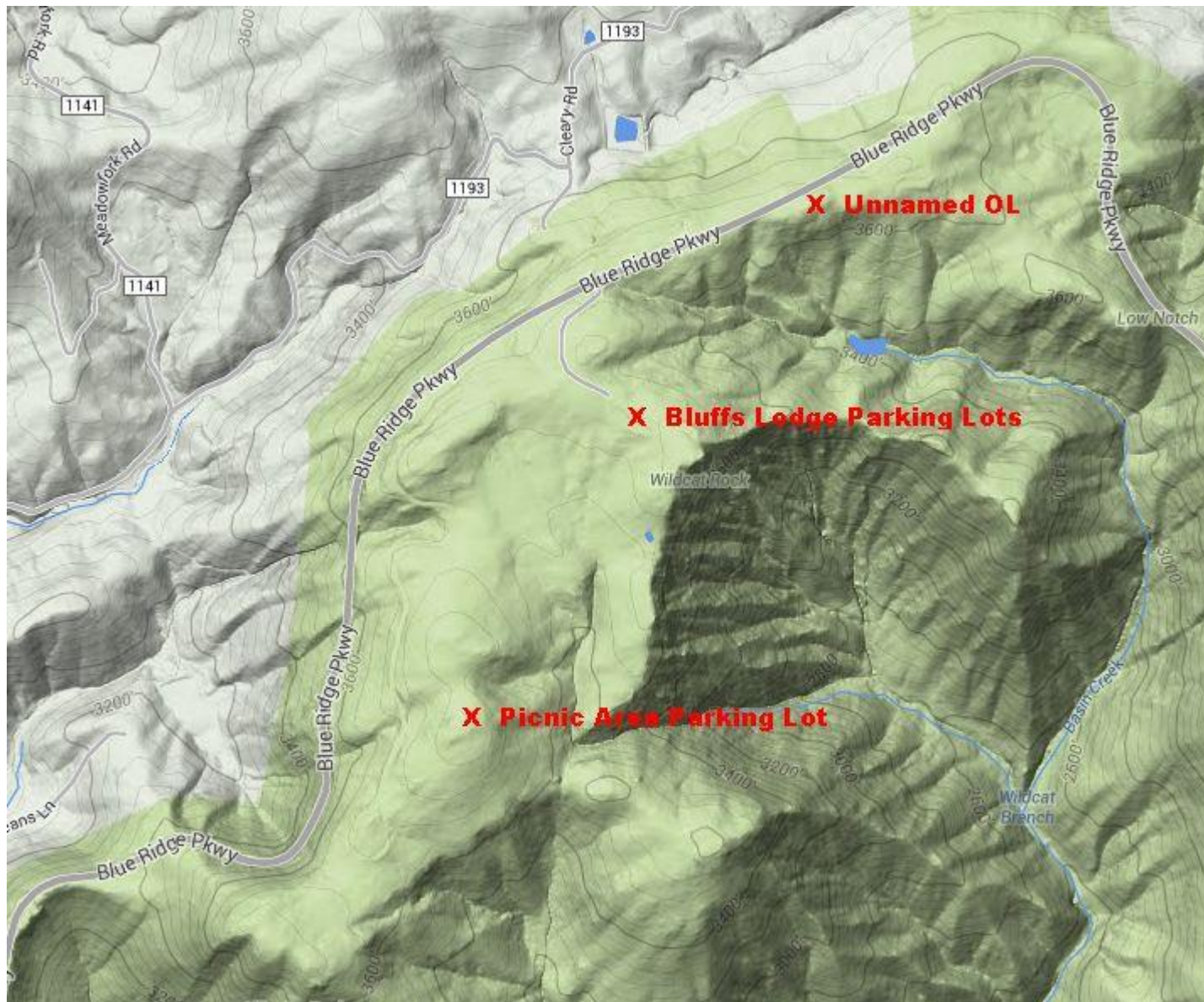
Blue Ridge Pkwy

X Bluffs Lodge Parking Lots (2)

Basin Creek

Wildcat Rock

Pkwy



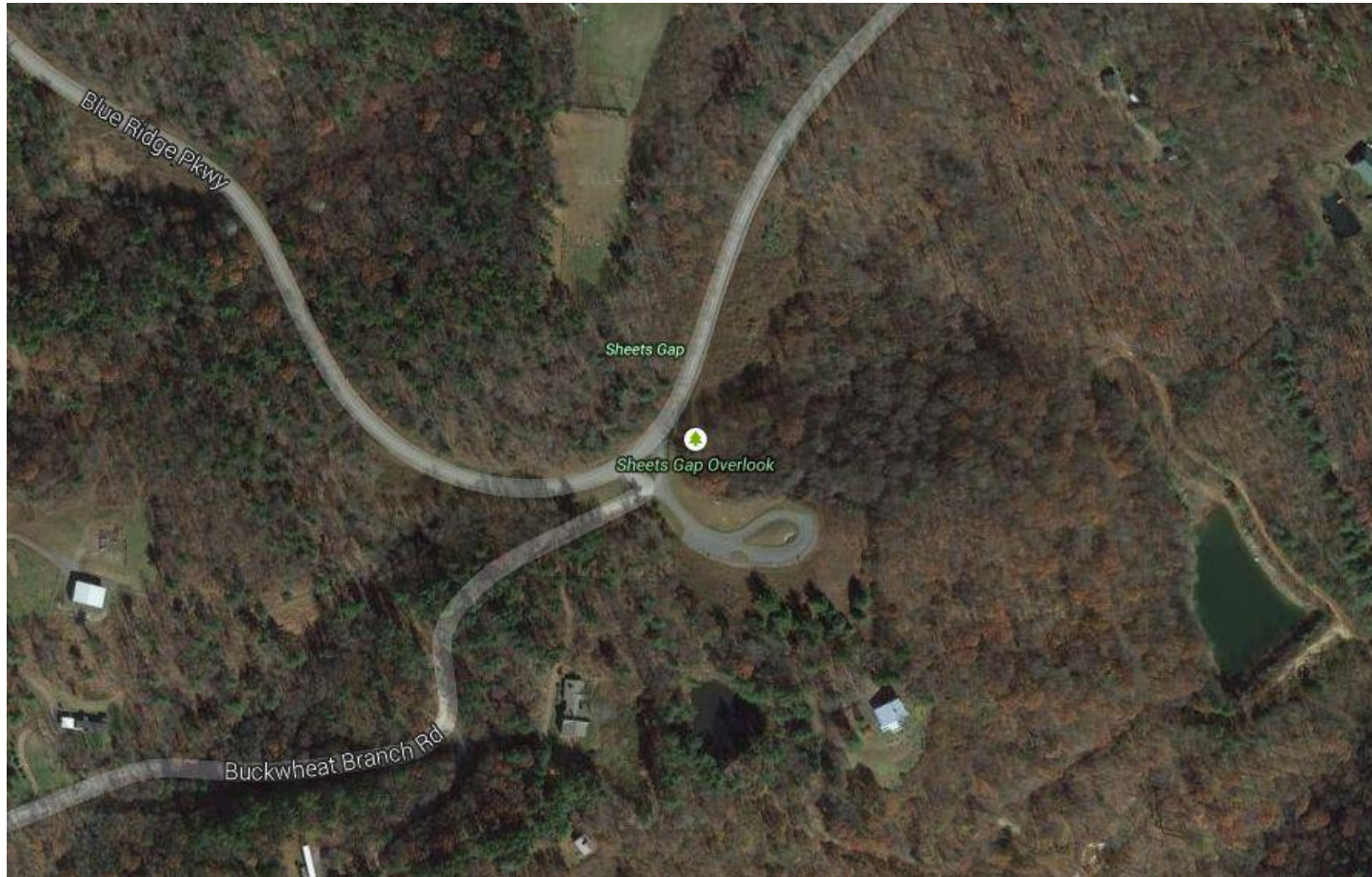
Doughton Park

- Hwy 421 to I-77 North to Hwy 21 North (off I-77 after Yadkin River at Elkin) to BRPkwy South to MP 241.1 Turn left into the Bluffs Lodge_{st} access road, then straight ahead to Lodge or 1 right to the Picnic area
- Can be windy, cold, Most used site
- 2 Bathrooms open while picnic area is unlocked
- Picnic area is closed by gate November- early April
- Campground nearby (in season)
- Occasionally unavailable in winter when snow gates are closed

Doughton Park



Sheet's Gap Overlook MP 252





Sparta
14.5 Miles

Miller's Campground

Blue Ridge Pkwy

18

1613
4.7 Miles to Sheet's Gap OL

Doughton Park
MP 248.1 7 Miles
Hwy 18-BRPkwy

N. Wilkesboro
24 Miles

MP 252.8
Sheets Gap Overlook

1620

Sparta Rd

1729

1567

1638

1617

1619

1144

1145

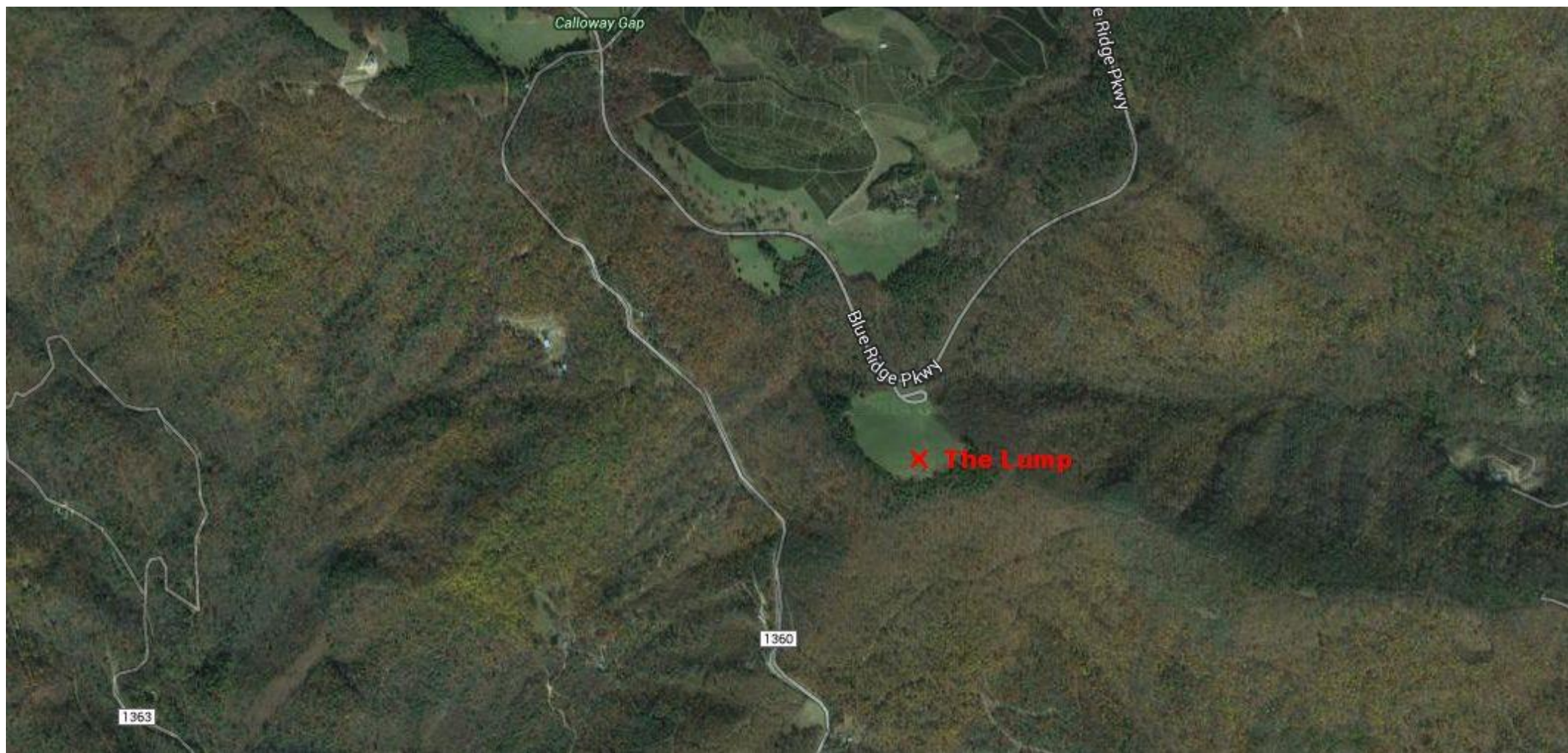


Sheet's Gap Overlook MP 252

- Hwy 421 West to N.Wilkesboro Hwy 18 West to BRPkwy then South 4.7 miles to MP 252.8
- Can Be cold, No facilities, Always open
- Good Winter site

The Lump Tom Dooley OL MP 264.4





Calloway Gap

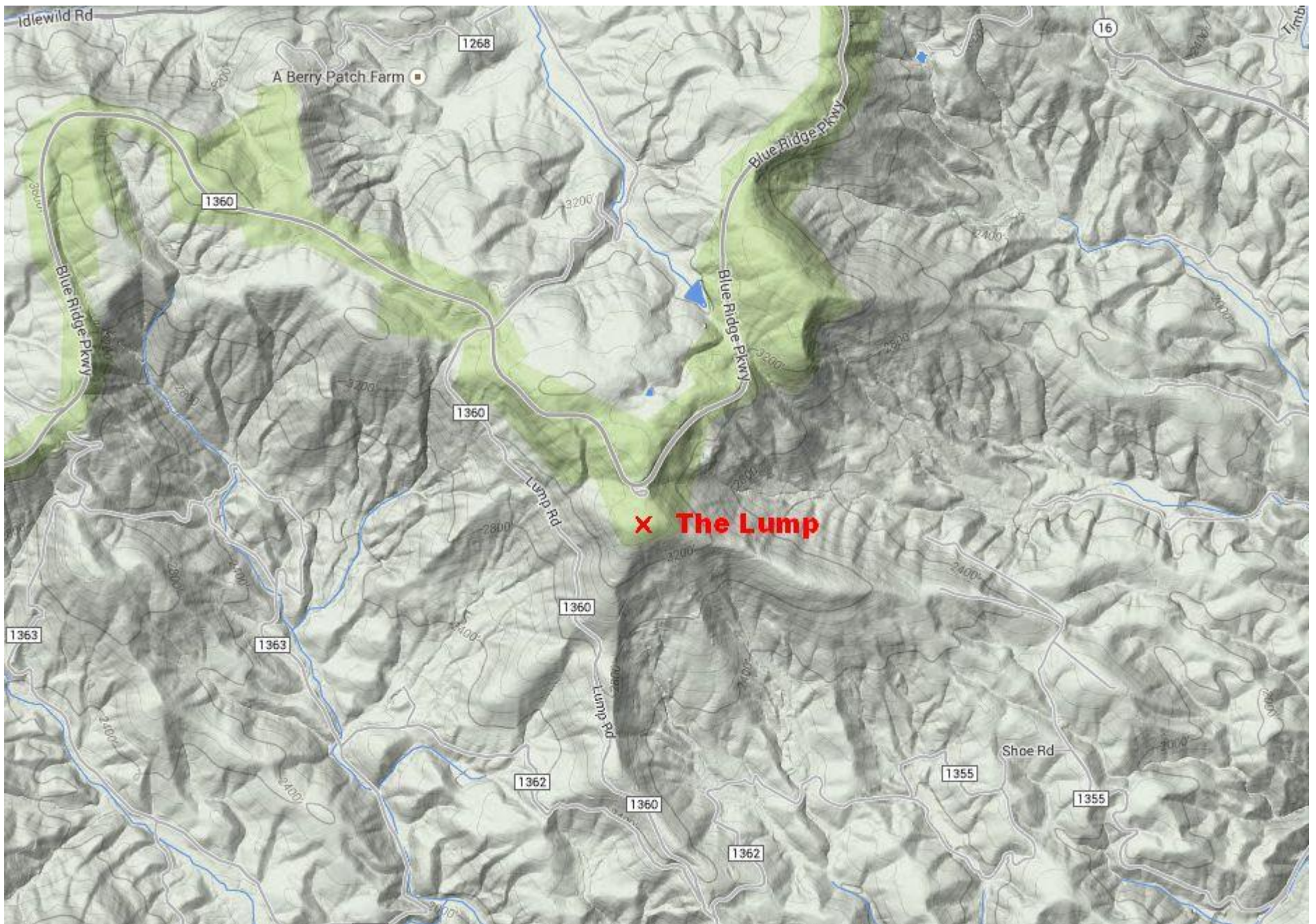
e Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

X The Lump

1360

1363



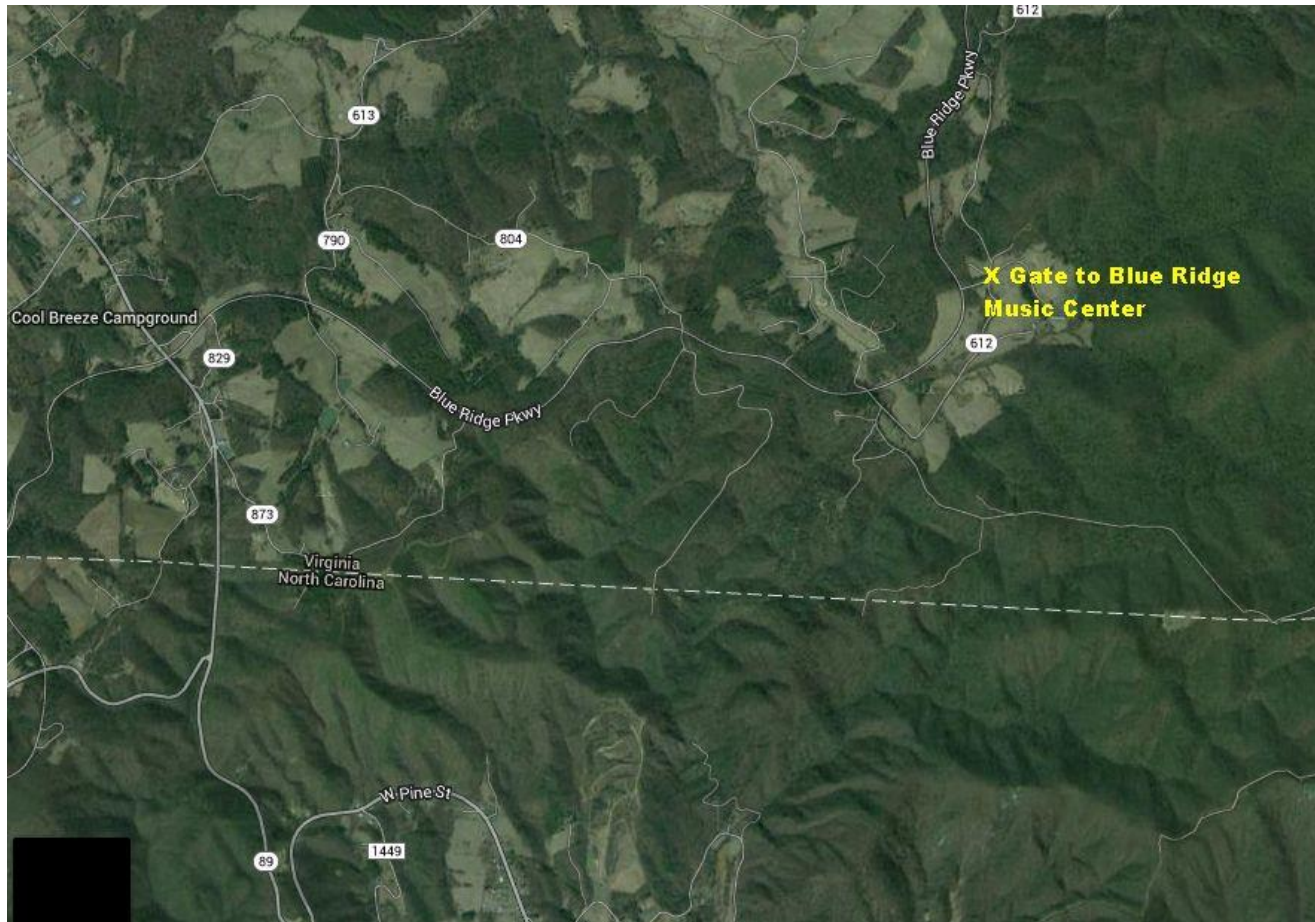
The Lump Tom Dooley OL MP 264.4

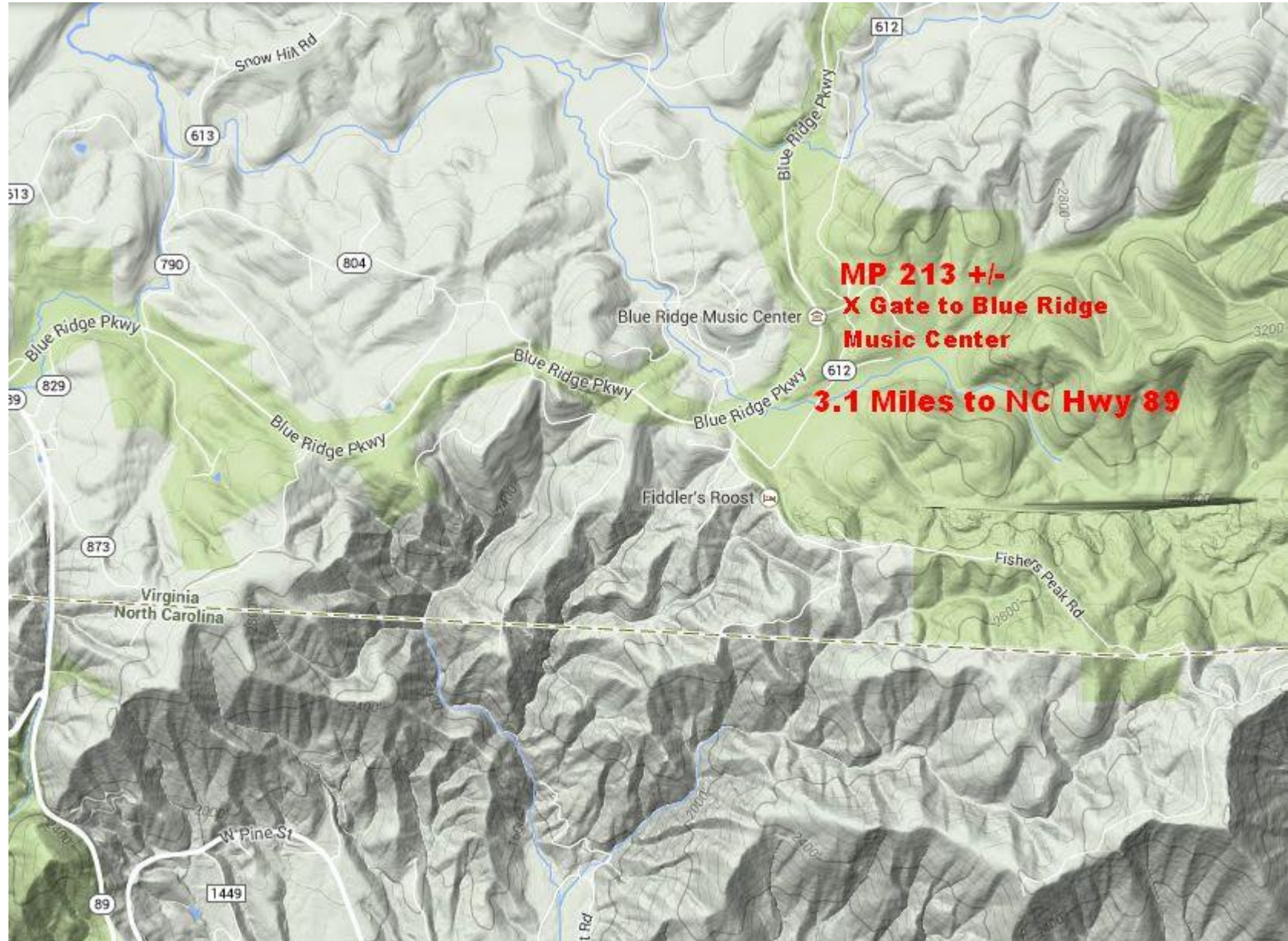
- Hwy 421 West to other side of N. Wilkesboro, right on Hwy 16 to BRPkwy, 3.2 Miles to The Lump/Tom Dooley overlook
- Can be Cold/Windy, No facilities
- Glendale Springs Restaurant is nearby (very good)
- Great views, Great meteor site
- To go to the top of The Lump itself, requires a short steep hike

The Lump



Blue Ridge Music Center MP 213





**MP 213 +/-
X Gate to Blue Ridge
Music Center
3.1 Miles to NC Hwy 89**

Blue Ridge Music Center MP 213

- US Hwy 52 N to Mt.Airy, West on Hwy 89 Then N on BRPkwy 3.1 miles to access road
- Sheltered site, available only when the Blue Ridge Music Center is not open
- Set up in front of gate on access road from Parkway
- Good site for everything, but especially photography on windy nights
- No facilities

Stone Mountain SP Campground







Stone Mountain SP Campground

- US Hwy 421 W, I-77 N, Left on Hwy 21 (at Elkin) 16 miles to left on Traphill Rd 4.4 miles to right on John P. Frank Parkway 3.3 miles to right into campground, There are signs from Hwy 21
- Gate closes at dark
- Can be very damp, bring dew shields/heaters
- Heated bathrooms/showers
- Someone has to bring a cover for septic tank lid
- Good Trout Fishing (easy access) and Hiking

Stone Mountain SP Campground



Mt Rogers/Whitetop Mt from Doughton Park



Groundhog Mt-Pilot Mt Overlooks

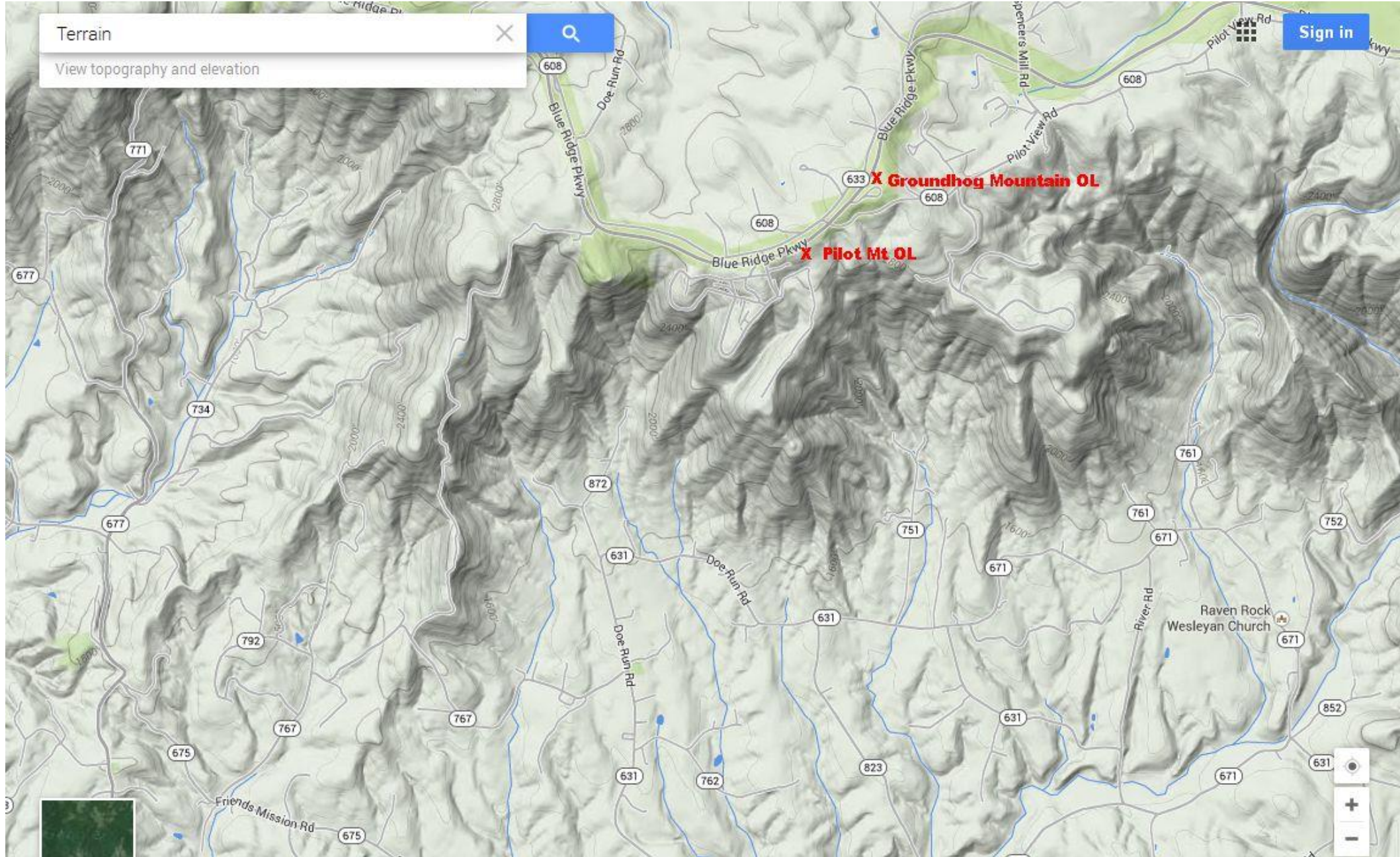


Terrain

View topography and elevation



Sign in



Groundhog Mt-Pilot Mt Overlooks

- Hwy 52 N to BRPkwy at Fancy Gap then North 10.8 miles to MP 188.8
- Pilot Mountain OL is just before Groundhog Mountain
- Restrooms at Groundhog Mt, Not open November-early April
- Pilot Mt OL can be OK site for meteors

Rocky Knob NP MP 169.2





X The Saddle

Visitor Center X
Campground
Bathrooms

X Parking Lot MP 169.2

Rocky Knob
Recreation Area

Fairview Church Rd SW

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Blue Ridge Pkwy

Rock Castle Rd

Little Rock
Castle Cr

Little Rock Castle Cr

Rocky Knob NP MP 169.2

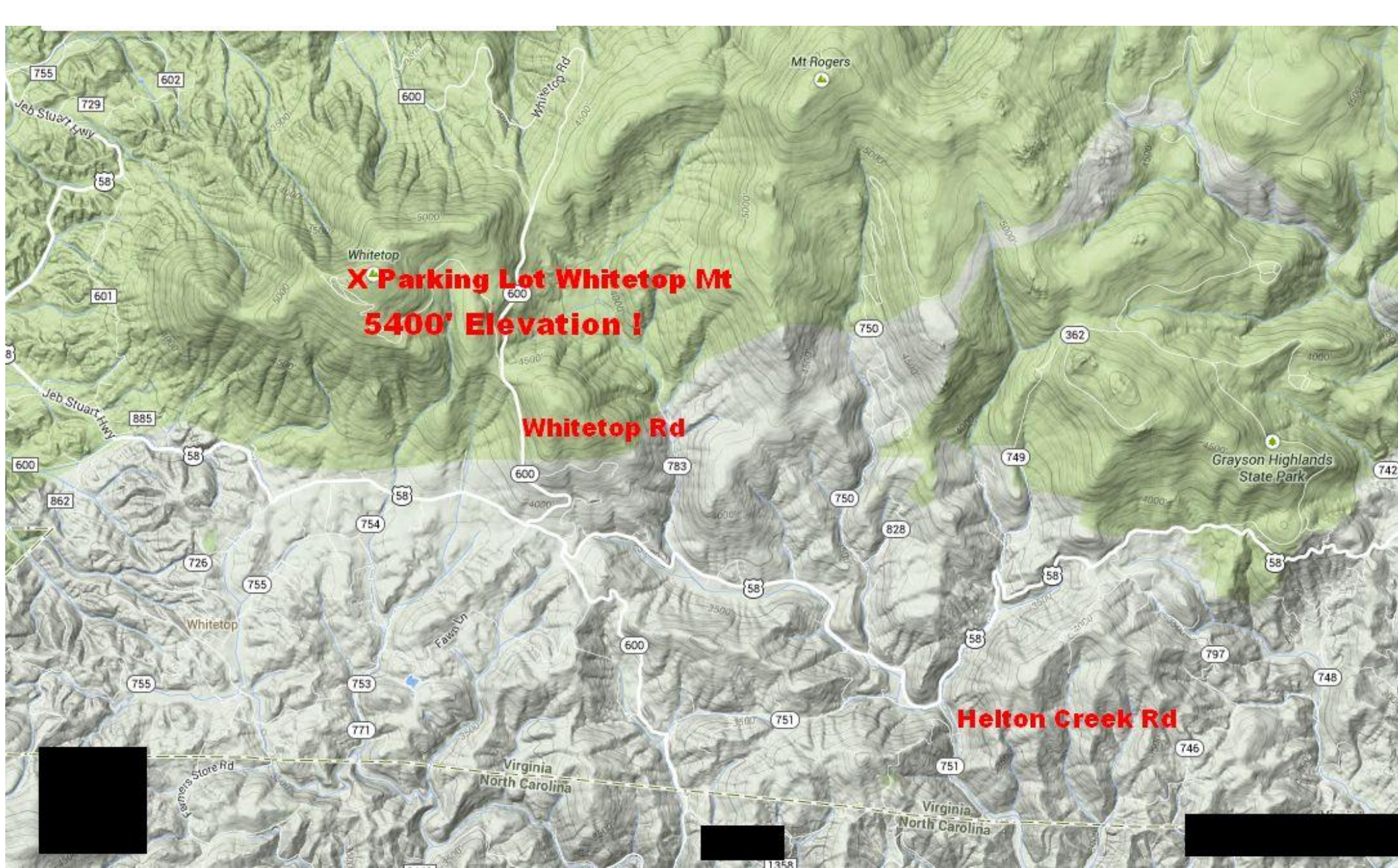
- Hwy 52 N to BRPkwy at Fancy Gap, then North on BRPkwy 30.6 Miles to MP 169.2
- Long Trip
- Campground/Restrooms nearby (In season)
- The Saddle can be very windy, Parking lot at MP 169.2 is better

Rocky Knob NP MP 169.2



Whitetop Mt Mt Rogers/Grayson Highlands SP

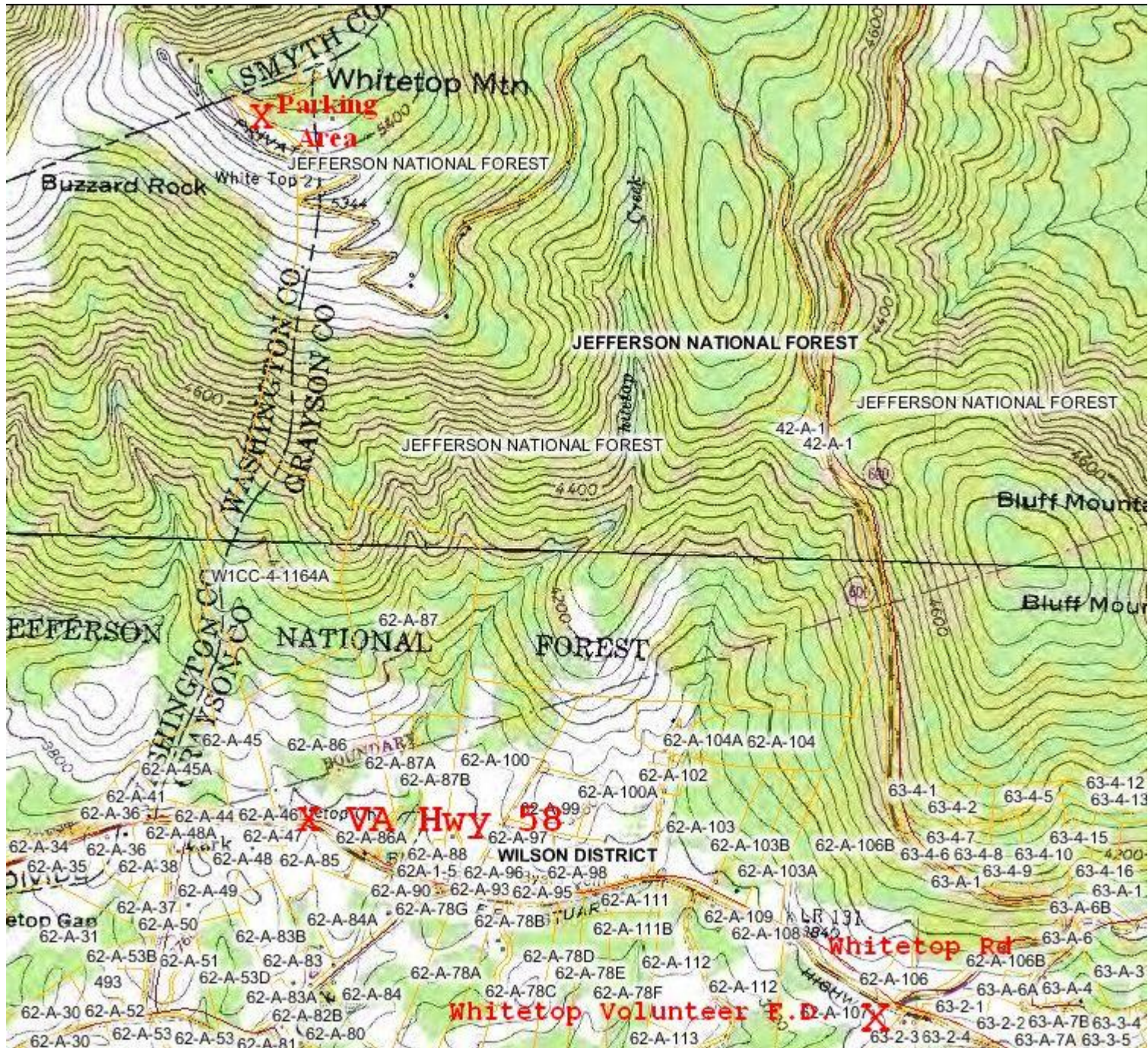


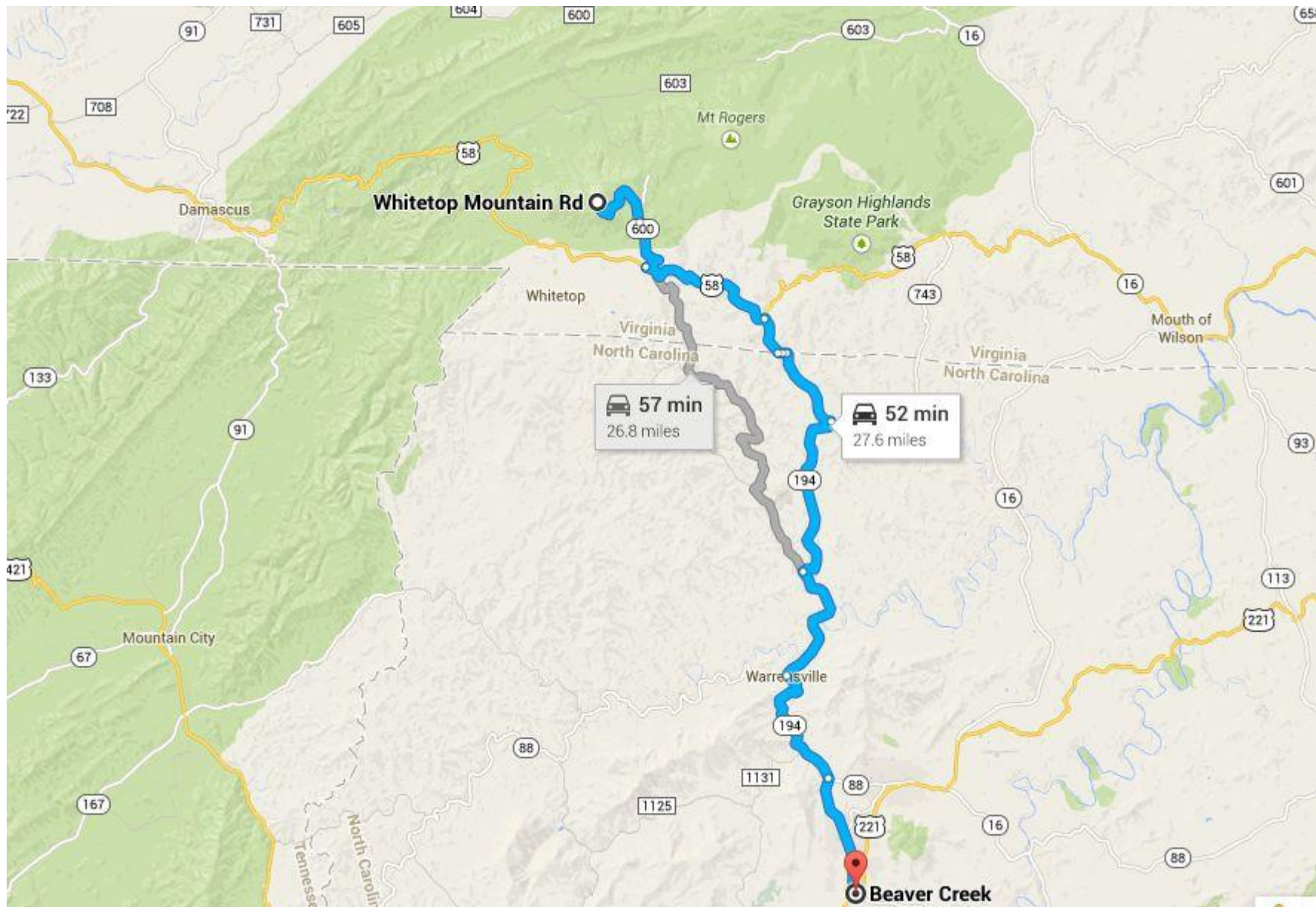


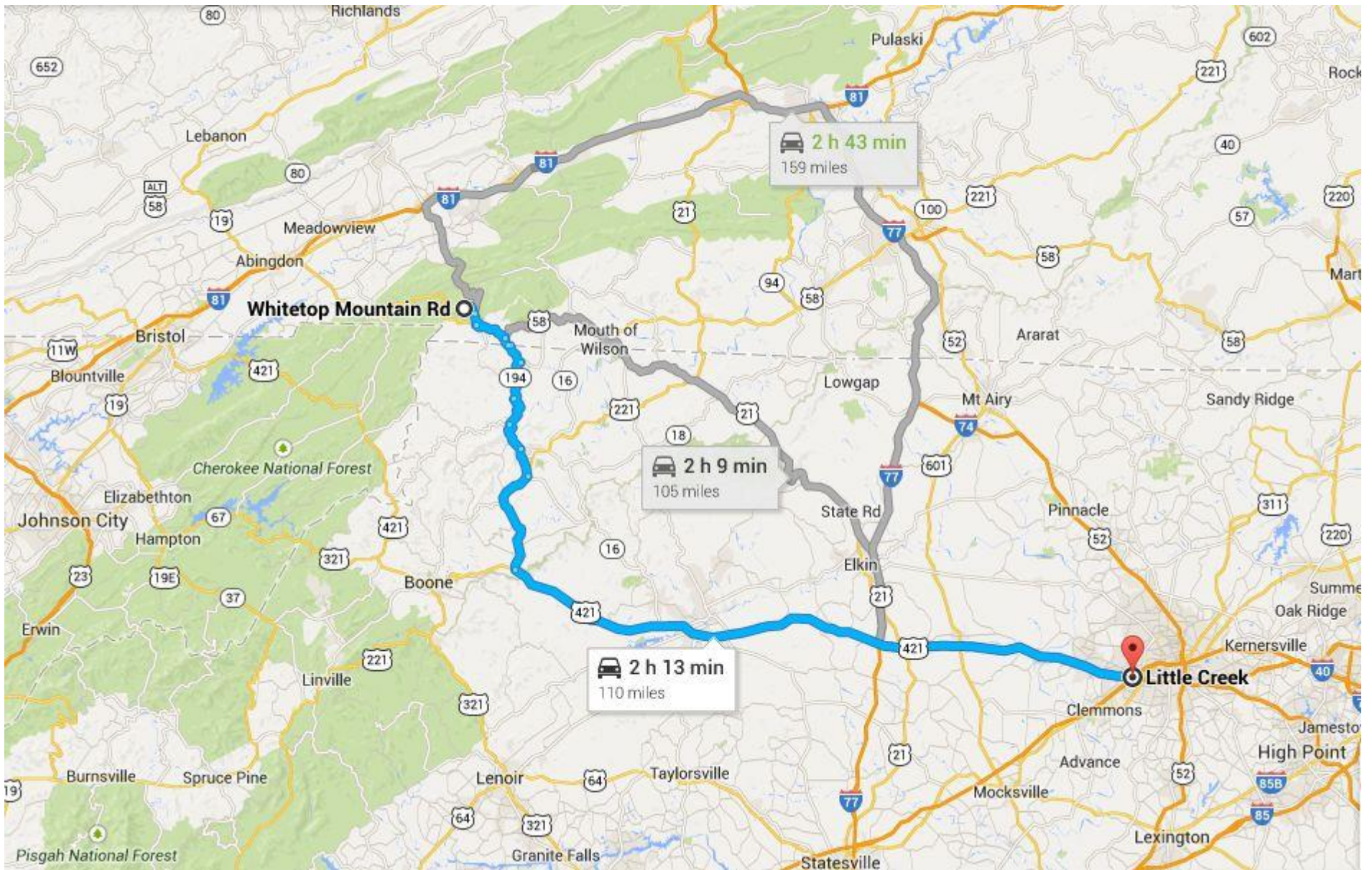
**X-Parking Lot Whitetop Mt
5400' Elevation !**

Whitetop Rd

Helton Creek Rd







Whitetop Mt Mt Rogers/Grayson Highlands SP

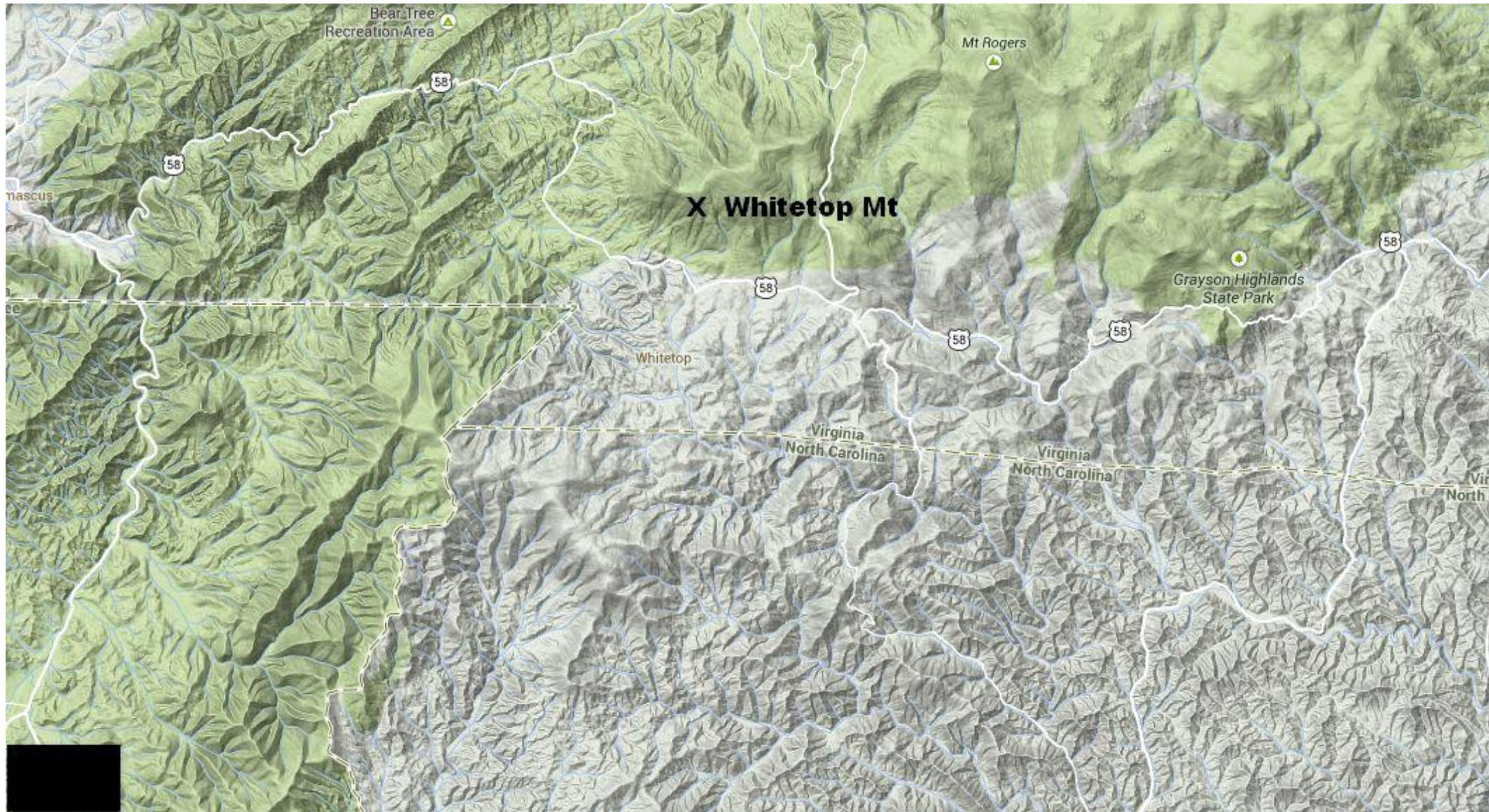
- Hwy 421 west to US Hwy 221 N (just past BRPkwy) to left on Hwy 194. to Sturgills,NC, then left on Helton Creek Rd, then Left on US Hwy 58, then right on Whitetop Rd, then 1.7 miles to left on Mud Creek Rd (gravel) to level gravel parking lot just short of summit
- One of the best, highest, and darkest sites on the east coast
- Sky to the North is blocked by the mountain

Whitetop Mt Mt Rogers/Grayson Highlands SP

- Can be very, very cold and windy
- Over 5400' elevation
- South side of mountain is cleared
- 1200'-2000' higher than surrounding mountains
- No facilities, very long trip (lots of backroads)
- Stunning views
- Access road can be rough in places but is quite passable (a long climb, though)

Whitetop Mt Mt Rogers/Grayson Highlands SP

- Mt Rogers/Grayson Highlands SP is nearby
- Camping and facilities
- Favorite site for Raleigh Club for camping
- Mt Rogers is the highest mountain in Virginia (Whitetop is slightly lower)
- Appalachian Trail trailhead at Whitetop Rd is also a usable site (parking lot at trailhead surrounded by a large meadow on both sides of road)



Cold Weather Tips

10 degree 25-30 mph wind night



Cold Weather Tips

- Keep your core warm (hips to shoulders)
- Dress in multiple layers
- Get good thermal underwear
- Good loose fitting shoes/boots, don't crowd toes
- Hat and gloves (glove liners/light gloves OK if core remains warm)
- Food and warm drinks help (excess carbs can makes you sleepy)
- Insulated ground layer for meteor observations (meteor observations can be one of the coldest situations you might encounter)
- I like some synthetic thermals, but not