

US Highways

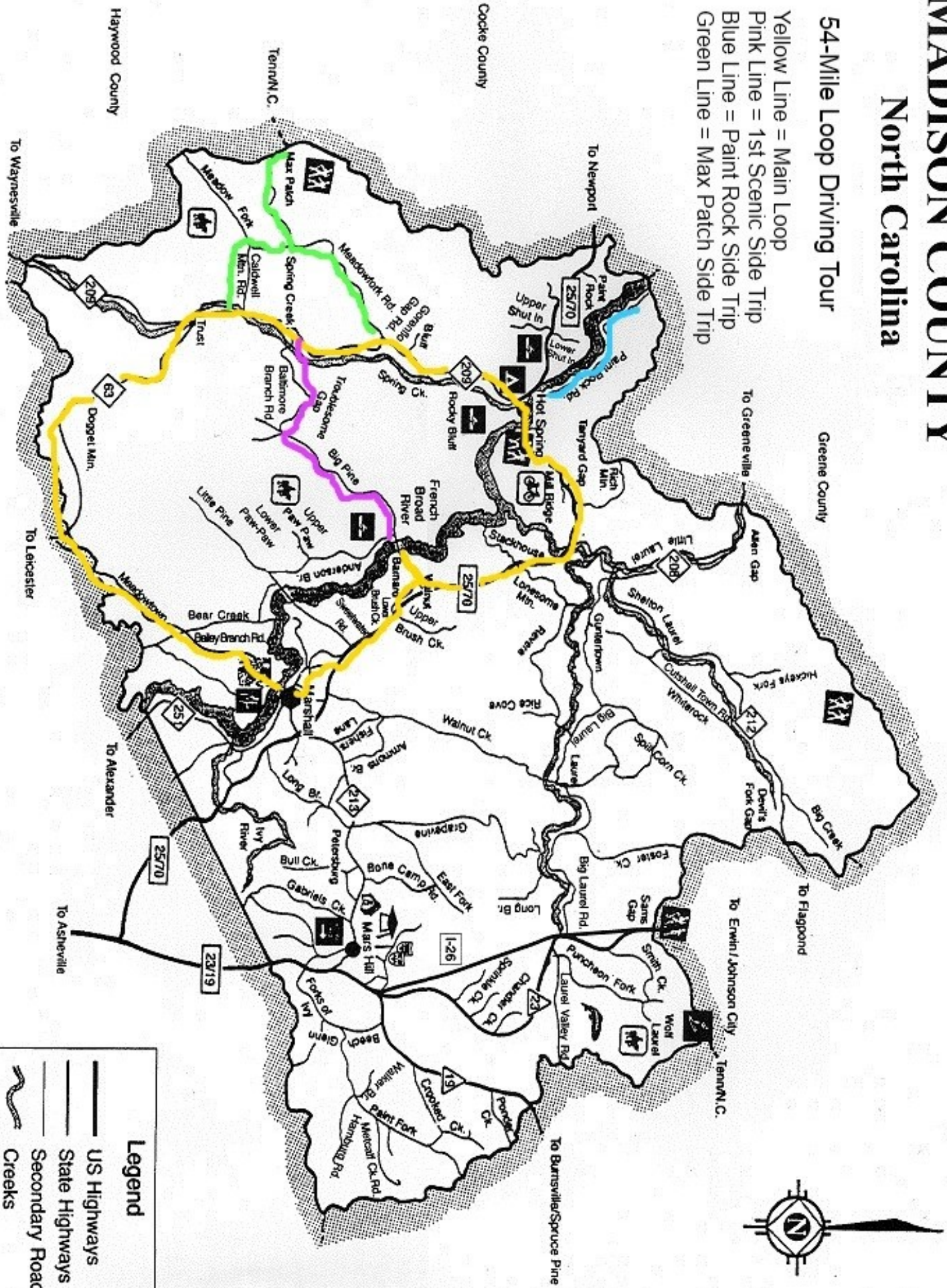
State Highways

Secondary Roads

Creeks

Rivers

Legend



54-Mile Loop Driving Tour

Yellow Line = Main Loop  
Pink Line = 1st Scenic Side Trip  
Blue Line = Paint Rock Side Trip  
Green Line = Max Patch Side Trip

MADISON COUNTY  
North Carolina

Meadowtown Road will eventually become Bailey's Branch Road and descend with beautiful views of Marshall and a white bridge that crosses the French Broad River into Marshall. Before you cross the river, there is an entrance on the left to Blannahasset Island, which was the site of the old Marshall High School and has been converted to artists' studios—Marshall High Studios.



To the right of the bridge, turn into a short road/parking lot to see the site of the Capitola Cotton Mill, opened in the early 1900's. It is now owned by the Capitola Hydroelectric Plant and is partially covered by metal. On its side you can see murals depicting factory work.

After crossing the French Broad River, turn right onto Main Street in front of the Madison County Courthouse. The brick building to the right of the Courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1903 on the site of the first courthouse in Marshall and was occupied by the French Broad Bank until 1976.

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The house next door with 2 full front porches is the historic Allen House. It was Confederate Colonel Lawrence M. Allen's house and it was raided in the Salt Raid which led to the Shelton Laurel Massacre during the Civil War. A Civil War Trails marker in front of the house tells the details of the story.



Continue on to 282 S. Main St. Beside the railroad tracks and the French Broad River, you will pass the old Train Depot and a red caboose on your right. The Depot is the site of Friday night local music.



As you continue with the French Broad River on your right, you come to a sign pointing to Mars Hill. Turn left to wind your way up to a left turn onto US 25/70. Or you can continue on the road (Business 25/70) beside the river toward Asheville.

DRIVING TOUR



54-Mile Loop  
Plus Side Trips

Enjoy the beauty of the rural landscape that Madison County has to offer by following the route designated in this self-guided Driving Tour. It starts in the town of Marshall and winds through the county's roads and takes you to the town of Hot Springs before looping back to Marshall.





Your tour begins at the Madison County Courthouse on Main Street in Marshall, called Lapland until it became the County Seat in 1858. The 1906 Neo-Classical brick building is the second courthouse built in Marshall and was designed by Richard Sharp Smith. It is topped with a cupola containing 7 clocks and a lantern used as a pedestal for the blind justice statue. There are 2 historical markers of interest on the Courthouse lawn to the left: one for David Vance, Governor Zeb Vance's father, and one for the Buncombe Turnpike Road.



Drive past the Courthouse and continue on Main Street (old US 25/70) uphill to intersect the new US 25/70. Turn left and continue through the areas of Walnut and Barnard. On your right where Upper Brush Creek intersects US 25/70 you will see Brush Creek Elementary School and the Madison County Middle School at a traffic light.

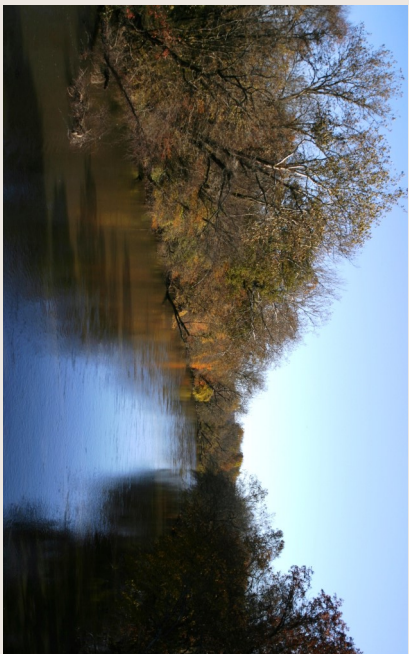
After passing the Brush Creek intersection on US 25/70, look for the fire station on your left and "Walnut" signs. Turn left at Walnut Road. This area was originally Jewell Hill. Go a short distance and turn left on Barnard Road. Pull in at the old white Methodist Church building on the left. The building was originally the Jewell Hill Methodist Church. It was built over the foundation of the log building used for the earliest sessions of the Madison County Court when Walnut was Jewell Hill, the County Seat of Madison County from 1851 through 1858. This was also the location of the Bell Institute which was operated by the Presbyterian Church USA from 1897 to 1913. See the historical marker in front of the building.



Stay on Barnard Road to the French Broad River. Originally, this area had a rest stop for the drovers who moved their herds of animals from Tennessee through Madison County to market in South Carolina on the Buncombe Turnpike Road. Later, loggers loaded pulpwood onto trains. If you go out on the bridge and look to your right, you see the remains of a building from the Buncombe Turnpike Road days. Across from the turnoff to the park at the river, you will see a brick store building, still left from the logging days with "Monte Love Gudger 1913" cut into the building front. The location fell into disuse after the demise of the logging companies until it became popular with whitewater rafting companies for access to the river.

**Side Trip—Scenic View:** (the Purple Line for 1<sup>st</sup> Scenic Side Trip) If you continue across the bridge and turn right, you go through the area of Big Pine, a picturesque area with well-kept farms and beautiful scenery. The more adventurous may want to continue over Troublesome Gap (gravel road) through the Spring Creek Mountains to NC 209 at Spring Creek township. Turn left on 209.

If you do not take the Side Trip, to continue your tour, retrace your route back to the white Methodist Church and turn left on Walnut Road to US 25/70. US 25/70 is a beautiful drive with the Walnut Mountains on your right. Turn left following US 25/70 to Hot



Springs crossing the Laurel River which carries the waters from Shelton Laurel, Little Laurel, and Big Laurel Creeks. You are 5 miles from Hot Springs. The road rises and enters the Pisgah National Forest. There will be a point of access to the Appalachian Trail on your right (about 2 miles after you made the left turn) just before you crest the hill and pass under the Appalachian Trail. US 25/70 curves southwest toward the French Broad River and Hot Springs.

**Side Trip: Point Rock (the Blue Line for the Point Rock Side Trip)** Turn right on River Road at the Point Rock historical marker. This marks the path hunters followed from Tennessee where they discovered warm mineral waters shortly after the Revolutionary War. Later the town of Warm Springs was established which was renamed Hot Springs after a hotter spring was found. Look for Murray Branch, a Pisgah National Forest site with a picnic area, BBQ pits, sheltered tables and public bathrooms between the river and the road. Continue to drive beside the French Broad River (part of the way on a good gravel road) to the border of Tennessee to see the remarkable cliff. There is a good turning place just before a sharp turn in the road at the rock as you approach the pavement of Tennessee. Make a U-turn to go back to US 25/70. Turn right on 25/70 across the French Broad River and you will be in the town of Hot Springs.

If you do not take the Side Trip, just drive into the town of Hot Springs. It is famous for the natural hot mineral springs. There are outdoor hot tubs filled with the mineral water available to rent by the hour. The town had a history in the 1800s and 1900s as a health resort and a popular vacation spot for the wealthy. During WWI, the Federal Government set up an internment camp for Germans. Additionally, the Appalachian Trail runs right down Main Street. Stay on US 25/70 until it makes a sharp turn to the right. Do not follow US 25/70 but keep straight on NC 209. Look for the home of Jane Gentry on the left on the corner of Walnut. There is a historical marker in front of the home. In 1916 folksong collector Cecil Sharp came to Hot Springs from England to write down old English ballads that had been passed down to the inhabitants of the more remote parts of the region from their British and Scottish ancestors. Jane Gentry was one of those people who sang for Sharp.



NC 209 rises through rocky bluffs and passes by (on the left) Rocky Bluff Campground, where a 0.1 mile hike takes you to Spencer's Overlook (if open). There are also 2 longer trails. Enjoy the scenic overlooks as you continue on NC 209. After NC 209 levels out in the Spring Creek Valley with Spring Creek running on your left, this is the Spring Creek "flats."

**Side Trip: Max Patch** (the Green Line for the Max Patch Side Trip) Worth another trip and more! As NC 209 descends and is still curvy, watch for a brown Max Patch sign and turn right onto Meadowfork Road. Follow the Max Patch Signs. You will turn right onto Little Creek. Continue to follow the Max Patch signs. You will be traveling on a good gravel road. Max Patch is a 350-acre bald at 4600 feet altitude with a 360 degree view overlooking mountains and valleys and crossed by the Appalachian Trail. It has the feel of The Sound of Music's "The Hills are Alive!" You will have a short hike to the Patch from the parking lot below. To get back to NC 209, retrace to Meadowfork Road, turn right, and then turn left onto Caldwell Mountain Rd to NC 209. Turn right on 209 to continue.



If you do not take the Side Trip, to continue your tour just drive further on NC 209 and, on the left, you will see a rock WPA-built school which has been renovated and is now the Community Center. It features local history and a community library.



Then NC 209 intersects NC 63 where you see the sign, TrUSt. Read "Trust Us." Keep right and visit the Trust General Store on the left. You'll find a local restaurant and a great variety of country store items along with a history display for the area. From the store, trace your route back on NC 209 to the intersection with NC 63 and turn right on NC 63.

NC 63 rises over Doggett Mountain, the site of part of the annual 100 mile Hot Doggett Bicycle Ride. The road is steep and curvy with beautiful views. As NC 63 straightens and levels off, look for a Pre-Civil War log cabin on your right. As you pass Clark's Branch Road, you have a good view of the house and outbuildings. "No Trespassing" signs are posted. Continue on NC 63 to see, on your left, the Reeves Home Place, a pre-Civil War brick house which has continued to be occupied. There is a green road sign marking the drive. With the Newfound Mountains wrapping from the west to southwest, NC 63 crosses a bridge into Buncombe County and passes the Reeves Grocery Store on the right. Look for a red barn on your right and then a tobacco barn on your left. Make a sharp left turn onto Sandy Mush Road. When you cross the bridge, you are back in Madison County. When you come to a T intersection, continue on Sandy Mush to the right. At a second T intersection, turn left onto Meadowtown Road. You'll pass many pastures, fields and large barns.

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE