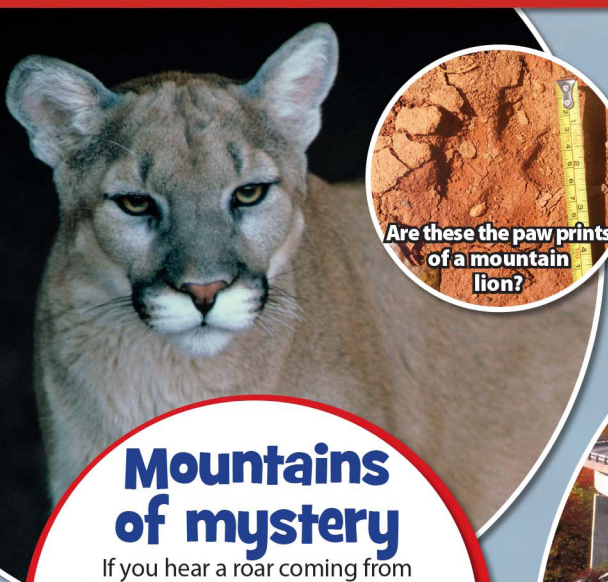
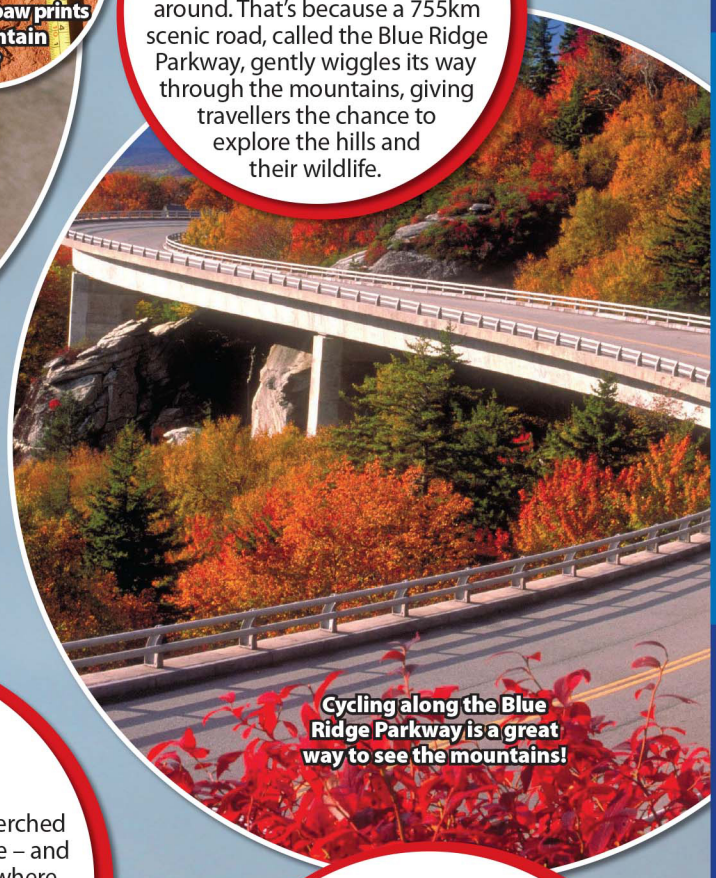


Are these the paw prints of a mountain lion?

Hit the road

This amazing land may be wild but it's actually really easy to get around. That's because a 755km scenic road, called the Blue Ridge Parkway, gently wiggles its way through the mountains, giving travellers the chance to explore the hills and their wildlife.



Cycling along the Blue Ridge Parkway is a great way to see the mountains!

Mountains of mystery

If you hear a roar coming from the hills, watch out – mountain lions could be prowling about! Park rangers say that they haven't lived here for years, but many local people believe otherwise. "We've heard the roar of mountain lions on several occasions," says Chip Balduf, who's also taken photos of mysterious tracks on his property.

Wacky weather

Blowing Rock (below) is a cliff perched 1,000m above a deep river gorge – and it's the only place in the world where the snow is said to fall *upside down!* The rocky walls of the gorge form a funnel, and as the wind sweeps through, any light objects that fall from the cliff are blown back up towards the sky – including the snow. Wow!

At Blowing Rock you can sit *above* the clouds!

Slide of your life!

Transylvania County is the wettest place in the whole of the USA, drenched in nearly 230cm of rain each year! It's also home to a whopping 250 waterfalls, like Looking Glass Falls and Sliding Rock, which is a huge sloping boulder in the Pisgah National Forest. People can slide down 20m of smooth stone, thanks to the 42,000 litres of water that rush over the boulder every minute. *Whoosh!*

Looking Glass Falls can ice up in the freezing winters!

Sliding Rock drops you into a two-metre-deep pool!

It's International Mountain Day on 11 December, so let's all help protect our amazing mountains. Go to mountainpartnership.org to find out more!

For further information on North Carolina, go to **uk.visitnc.com**

Proud PEAKS

Check out these other famous mountains from around the world…

Mount Everest

Everest, on the border of Nepal and Tibet, is the highest mountain on Earth. Towering at a colossal 8,850m, Mount Everest was formed about 50-60 million years ago.

Everest is top of the planet's peaks

Ben Nevis

The highest mountain in the British Isles, Ben Nevis is in the Scottish Highlands. It was formed 40 million years ago and is 1,344m high.

Ben Nevis is the British Isles' biggest mountain

Kilimanjaro

This mountain, the highest in Africa at 5,892m, is actually a volcano. It's a baby in comparison to the mountains in the Blue Ridge – it started life (first erupted) just two million years ago.

Africa's highest mountain is the cool Kilimanjaro

Blue Ridge Parkway: Hugh Morton. Mountain lion tracks: Chip Balduf. Mountain lion, Everest, Kilimanjaro © Getty Images UK. Ben Nevis: David Crocker. Looking Glass Falls: Mark File. Sliding Rock: Transylvania Tourism / Tracy Turpen. Blowing Rock: visitblowingrock.com