

Executive Summary

**Yadkin County, North Carolina
Natural Areas**

North Carolina Natural Heritage Program

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SIGNIFICANT NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS OF YADKIN COUNTY

Yadkin County is located in the northwestern Piedmont of North Carolina. The landscape consists of gently rolling hills, forests, and farmlands, bisected by stream valleys. At the far western edge of the county lies the eastern limit of the Brushy Mountains. The northern and eastern border of the county is formed by the Yadkin River. The highest point in the county is Star Peak near Jonesville, at 1,590 feet above sea level.

Yadkin County has a long agricultural history, and consequently natural areas in this county are not as abundant as in other locations, even within the Piedmont. All of the natural areas currently known from Yadkin County are associated with remnant bluffs and ravines along waterways that have persevered over time. Public lands in Yadkin County include Pilot Mountain State Park, which extends into northern Yadkin County.

Several natural area inventories have covered Yadkin County. These include the Inventory and Classification of the Primary Natural Communities and Wildlife Habitats of the Yadkin River Corridor in Davie, Forsyth, and Yadkin Counties North Carolina (Frye, 1992); an Addendum to the Yadkin River Natural Areas Inventory (Frye, 1993); and An Inventory of Mafic Areas in the North Carolina Piedmont (Oakley et. al. 1995). Currently, five sites are tracked in Yadkin County, four of Regional significance and one of county significance. For more information on the Yadkin County Inventory please contact the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program at 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699, (919) 715-8687 or visit our website at <http://www.ncnhp.org>.

Site Descriptions

Donnaha Slopes consists of steep northeast-facing slopes with occasional outcrops and good quality, mature Basic Mesic Forest (Piedmont Subtype). The diverse shrub layer includes an abundance of wild hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*), highland doghobble (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*), mapleleaf arrowwood (*Viburnum acerifolium*), yellowroot (*Xanthorhiza simplicissima*), and American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*). The lush, diverse herb layer includes abundant black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), heartleaf aster (*Aster divaricatus*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), and false Solomon's seal (*Smilacina racemosa*). Herbs preferring rich soils such as cutleaf toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), cove bladder-fern (*Cystopteris protrusa*), and spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*) are present. This site is privately-owned.

North Deep Creek Bluffs is a series of ravines, narrow floodplains, and bluffs along a large creek. The aquatic community of Deep Creek appears to be in excellent condition. High quality examples of Piedmont/Coastal Plain Heath Bluff, Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, and Dry Oak--Hickory Forest are present in the site. This site is privately-owned.

Shallowford Road Bluff consists of steep east-facing bluffs above a narrow floodplain on the west side of the Yadkin River. The natural community is predominantly Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, with a marginally developed Basic Mesic Forest (Piedmont Subtype) in one small area. The herb layer is very diverse, including maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), Canadian wild lovage (*Ligusticum canadense*), anise-root (*Osmorhiza longistylis*). Walking fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*) and maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) occur on moist outcrops. Also present near the Yadkin River is a good quality Piedmont/Mountain Alluvial Forest. These forests were heavily disturbed by Hurricane Hugo and there is intrusion of invasive species. This site is privately-owned.

Yadkin Islands Forest includes about two miles of north-facing bluffs and bottomlands along the Yadkin River. High quality Piedmont/Coastal Plain Heath Bluff, Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, and marginal Piedmont/Coastal Plain Acidic Cliff communities occur on the bluffs. Piedmont/Low Mountain Alluvial Forest and Floodplain Pool communities occur in the floodplain. Part of this site is protected by the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation as Pilot Mountain State Park, the rest is privately owned.

Yadkin River (Surry/Yadkin/Forsyth) Aquatic Habitat contains populations of the federal species of concern and state endangered Brook floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*) as well as the state threatened Creeper (*Strophitus undulatus*).

