

Visit Floyd County and Buffalo Mountain



Buffalo Mountain is one of the most significant natural areas in Virginia. It boasts an amazing 13 rare plant occurrences, 3 rare animal occurrences, and 6 significant natural communities. The combination of high-elevation (3,971 feet), wind-exposed openings at the summit, and magnesium rich soils make it unlike any place else in the Commonwealth.

On the treeless summit, strong winds and boreal climate support subalpine vegetation including three-toothed cinquefoil and Rocky Mountain woodsia. The south face of the mountain contains grassy, prairie-like openings composed of wildflowers and native warm-season grasses more typical to the Midwest than to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Wet, magnesium-rich seeps along the base of the mountain support globally rare grasses and wildflowers such as bog bluegrass and large-leaved grass-of-parnassus.

Buffalo Mountain is also the only known location in the world for a mealybug called *Puto kosztarabi*.

Buffalo Mountain was part of a large tract of land granted to Revolutionary War hero General Henry “Lighthorse Harry” Lee as a reward for his military service. The property passed on to his sons, Charles Carter Lee and Civil War General Robert E. Lee. Charles Carter Lee built a home near the base of the mountain, and his former law office, a small log cabin, still stands on an adjoining piece of land.

Public access facilities include a small parking area and a steep 1 mile hiking trail to the summit. Part or all of the preserve may be periodically closed for resource protection or prescribed burning activities. A preserve guide factsheet can be viewed [here](#).

SOURCE: Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation.