

# A Park Opportunity

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 1967

THE Parks Committee of the State Board of Conservation and Development should seize the opportunity to get Pilot Mountain into the state park system. Not often do deals like this one come around.

In the first place, the state can get Pilot Mountain and its surroundings for little or no money. The Northwest Economic Development Commission proposes to buy the mountain with federal funds and private contributions, then turn it over to the state.

Secondly, accepting Pilot Mountain would give the State Parks Division an attractive and unspoiled park within easy driving distance of some of the state's fastest growing urban centers.

And finally, helping the Northwest Economic Development Commission close a deal on the mountain will as-

sure that this landmark is saved before its owner sells out to commercial developers.

If the Parks Committee decides not to accept the park—or delays a decision for too long—the Northwest Commission will go ahead with its plans to acquire the mountain and entrust it to a multi-county recreation commission.

The area recreation commission might serve as a good interim arrangement for preserving Pilot as a park, but state ownership would be much preferable in the long run. As a state park, the mountain would be assured of adequate care and maintenance over the years.

Because Pilot Mountain meets the chief criteria for a state park—it is well-located and not blighted by commercialism—the Northwest Commission's offer seems too good to decline.

## Paving the World

A DUKE University professor recently warned us that the population of this country—indeed of the entire world—is growing at such a pace that we swiftly are running out of open space. To symbolize what is occurring he suggested that the United States adopt the concrete cloverleaf as its national flower.

The process is under way in North Carolina. It is, in fact, so readily visible that conservationists all over the nation have expressed concern over this state's apparent inability to preserve Smith Island in its natural state. Located in the mouth of the Cape Fear River this island—some call it Baldhead—is the last remaining example of unspoiled maritime wilderness to be found on our coast. Its owner proposes to develop the island into a seashore playground of the Miami type.

The problem posed by Smith Island is not unique. There are areas right here in Northwest North Carolina that need our urgent attention.

We well could initiate steps to assure the preservation of Pilot Mountain as the symbol of this region. The fact that "The Pilot" remains today much as it has

been in years past is no assurance that we will not wake one day to discover that this rock spire is adorned in neon and spattered with such notations as "KILROY WAS HERE!"

And what of Stone Mountain in Wilkes County? This majestic dome of granite, humping 600 feet high and glaring white against the cool greens of the woods below, is one of the greatest outcroppings of its kind to be found anywhere.

Some, perhaps, can recall what exploitation for private profit did to Linville Falls before that handsome area was taken over and preserved by the National Park Service.

Recognizing the trend of the times—a trend symbolized by the concrete cloverleaf—we should act now to assure that Pilot Mountain and Stone Mountain will be protected from exploitation and preserved for those who will follow us. Let us, then, in the coming two years recruit the public support and draft the legislation which will cause each of these distinctive mountains to be included in North Carolina's State Park system.

This region and this state will be richer if we do.

# Citizens Will Push Pilot Mountain Park

By Jeanette Reid

PILOT MOUNTAIN—Leaders of a five-county area approved last night the appointment of a citizens' committee to help make the Pilot Mountain a state park.

One of the main duties of the new Pilot Mountain preservation committee will be to raise \$350,000 as the local cost of the \$910,500 project.

Joe C. Matthews, executive director of the Northwest Economic Development Commission, will coordinate the com-

mittee appointments by working with representatives from each county involved. The appointments should be complete, Matthews said, by the end of the week.

The 20 - member committee will be proportionate to each county's population as follows: Davie, 2; Forsyth, 7; Stokes, 3; Surry, 5; and Yadkin, 3.

Reporting on a meeting with state officials 10 days ago, Matthews said that quick action and an appropriation of funds from the 1967 General Assembly have been ruled out.

He also expressed fear that the mountain will have already been sold two years from now when the next General Assembly meets.

Thomas Ellis, superintendent of state parks, said that the mountain property plus 500 additional acres is extremely suitable for a state park. He said over \$1 million in federal land and water conservation funds is available to North Carolina.

Matthews said that securing other federal funds is promising at this time.

Proposed financing of the project includes \$350,000 in land and water conservation plan funds, \$210,500 in Appalachian funds, plus \$350,000 in local funds.

The proposed park would be turned over to the State Parks Committee for administration and maintenance. The committee has not formally agreed to accept the park but leaders are optimistic about approval at the committee's July meeting.

The park would include 1,066 acres of mountain property owned by Mrs. J. W. Beasley of Pilot Mountain, plus 500 acres of road frontage and surrounding property suitable for camping.

Mrs. Beasley, who wants the mountain preserved as a scenic attraction instead of becoming commercialized, has agreed to sell it for \$682,500. The additional land is under purchase agreement for \$228,000, or a total acquisition cost of \$910,500.

The group at last night's meeting ate supper and watched the sun set from atop the mountain as they endorsed the mountain as a state park.

Fred Hauser, chairman of Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, said the best way to lose the mountain would be to postpone efforts to obtain it.

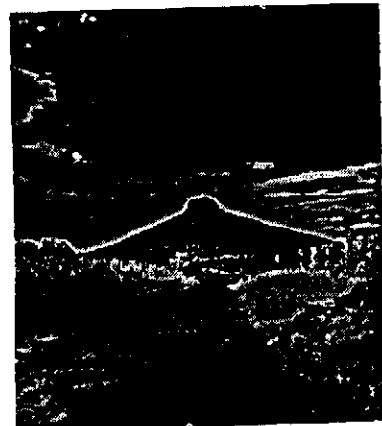
In answer to a question about the mountain park sufficiently different from the proposed Triad Park, Hauser said, "In my opinion one complements the other."

He said the mountain's uniqueness should be preserved but that this need is so apparent, everybody had said it and there is nothing new to say. He said he understood there was only one other like it in the world.

Randall Reeves, a Surry County commissioner, urged that efforts to secure the mountain be pushed harder. He said that the area now has an opportunity to provide a scenic attraction that will be here forever.

J. T. Harris of Pilot Mountain, a member of the Economic Development Commission, said "This mountain will be up for grabs a year from now. If we don't do something about it, we will be sitting somewhere else looking at it."

The meeting was called by the Northwest Economic Development Commission, which has co-ordinated studies and efforts to secure the park to date.



PILOT MOUNTAIN

To the Editor of the Journal:

United States Astronaut, Lt. Col. Ed White, in his last public interview before the fatal accident is quoted as having said, "We have somehow got to make this a better place to live—the world, I mean. Out there in space you can see the problems in better perspective. They look mighty small from 150 miles up. The world itself looks cleaner and so much more beautiful. Maybe we can make it that way, the way God intended it to be, by giving everyone, eventually, that new perspective from out in space."

It will be quite a while before many of us can view the earth from 150 miles up. Yet many of us are in need of this new perspective referred to by Lt. Col. White. Perhaps while we are waiting for the next space ship to come along we should look for such a place here on earth that might give us at least a glimpse of this new perspective. I think I know of such a place.

Try sitting alone in the quiet solitude of nature atop the stately pinnacle of Pilot Mountain with the Piedmont spread out at your feet: where the whisper of the wind through the rocks drowns out the noise of progress below, where distance slows down time and the speed of the race below to a pace we would all like to go, where the colors of nature spread below distract you from the man made scars and where you can nearly get the feeling of a wilderness surrounding. In such a place as this you can certainly witness at least in a small way what Lt. Col. White had in mind.

Our community has always been fortunate in having civic minded leaders that have provided us with adequate hospitals, schools, roads, libraries, etc. We are more than fortunate that we have such leadership interested in our having a place where a weary soul can pause and de-magnify its problems. A project to make Pilot Mountain available to all of us as well as future generations is worthy of our support both financially and otherwise.

—BILL WEBSTER