

# Please help us save Chimney Rock Park!

www.savechimneyrock.net

Dear Friend,

We have an urgent request!! As you might have heard, Chimney Rock Park is for sale. One of North Carolina's most important national icons is at risk of falling into the hands of a private developer with unknown intentions, when it should be the centerpiece of the best state park in the Southeast.

Key officials must know NOW how important preservation of the park is to you and your family.



The Friends of Hickory Nut Gorge, a group formed earlier this year with the mission of protecting the beauty and integrity of the Gorge, needs immediate help to steer all critical parties toward a solution that preserves the park. Please take the time at this crucial juncture to personally contact those listed below to ensure that the park owners and the State of North Carolina negotiate until a deal is reached. Without action, the character of the entire Gorge could be permanently altered.

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Please contact these people, in order of priority (addresses and sample letter on back and on website):

- 1) Governor Mike Easley. The governor must get personally involved in the negotiations.
  - 2) Park owners Todd and Lucius Morse.
  - 3) Letters to the editor of every newspaper in the region as well as national papers like the USA Today.
  - 4) The director of the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, Lewis Ledford.
  - 5) Your North Carolina elected officials in both the State House and State Senate.
  - 6) Your U.S. Congressional representatives.
  - 7) Ask your town, city, county government or civic group to pass a resolution in support of this effort.
  - 8) Everyone you've ever known since the third grade to join the effort. ☺
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## WHAT TO WRITE OR SAY

Letters to the editor and to key officials and phone calls should:

- Be positive, respectful, and non-confrontational!
  - Thank the governor and state general assembly members for their support of the unprecedented amount of \$15 million passed in the state budget as a special appropriation for Hickory Nut Gorge State Park.
  - Urge Governor Mike Easley to get personally involved to reach a deal with the state that preserves the park.
  - Urge North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation officials to stay vigilant and flexible in reaching a deal.
  - Thank the Morse family for their stewardship over the past 100 years keeping Chimney Rock Park special.
  - Urge the Morse family to strongly consider a deal with the state to preserve the family's legacy.
  - Emphasize the regional importance of Chimney Rock Park one of the most recognizable landmarks in the state; one of the most significant ecological sites in the Southeast; and an important tourist draw.
  - Tell your own story about what the park means to you.
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This is NOT a fundraising letter. We do, however, need some money to defray the cost of necessities such as printing, postage and website development. Consider a donation to help cover these expenses by sending a tax-deductible contribution to:

*Friends of Hickory Nut Gorge, C/O Rutherford Outdoor Coalition, P.O. Box 1349, Rutherfordton, NC 28139*

(Make checks payable to Rutherford Outdoor Coalition, and write "Friends of HNG" as a note on the check to earmark the funds.)

Dear Governor Easley,

First let me thank you for your support of the unprecedented \$15 million special appropriation for land purchases related to the Hickory Nut Gorge State Park. I understand the effort it took to keep that money in the budget and the commitment on your part to protect the special place that is Hickory Nut Gorge.

The most outstanding tract of the entire Gorge, however, still hangs in the balance. Chimney Rock Park, as you are well aware, is on the market and at risk of falling into the wrong hands. I am writing to urge you to get personally involved in keeping the state and the park owners at the bargaining table until an agreement is reached to buy and preserve the park.

To me, the best long-term solution for Chimney Rock Park is for it to become the centerpiece of what could be the greatest state park in the Southeast, maybe in the country. Other options, such as a public-private partnership, should be considered if the integrity of the park is not compromised. Having the park preserved directly by the people of the state of North Carolina, however, will ensure a permanent legacy for you and the State.

Chimney Rock Park one of the most recognizable landmarks in the state and an integral part of North Carolina. Having the park fall into the wrong hands risks losing part of the state's beauty and character. Please find time in your busy schedule to work directly with the Morse family to reach a solution that we can all look back on and take pride in.

I appreciate your time and thank you for any attention you can give to this irreplaceable part of our history.

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Key contact information (for others please visit the website):

Governor Michael F. Easley Officer of the Governor 20301 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-0301 800-662-7952 (NC only) 919-733-4240 or 919-733-5811 E-Mail: <a href="http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Contact.asp">http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Contact.asp</a>
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Lewis Ledford Director, NC Division of Parks and Recreation 1615 MSC Raleigh, NC 27699 Ph: 919-733-4181 E-mail: <a href="mailto:lewis.ledford@ncmail.net">lewis.ledford@ncmail.net</a>
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Todd Morse President/Owner Chimney Rock Park Co. P.O. Box 39 U.S. 64/74-A Chimney Rock, NC 28720 Ph. 828-625-9611 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:tmorse@chimneyrockpark.com">tmorse@chimneyrockpark.com</a>
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