

## Eric L. Gressel Memorial Trails Dedication

Nothing pleased Eric Gressel more than strapping on hiking boots and leading his family into nearby state and national forests to learn their untold secrets. The Orchard's compelling mix of natural and cultural history drew him to become one of its most avid volunteers. He learned the stories of Altapass and could tell them from memory. He knew each apple variety, which ones were at their peak of ripeness, and their specific locations in the Orchard. His love of family extended to all he met, making him a favorite Orchard guide. He walked these trails when he lived, and we remember him as we walk them now.

The easy paths of the *Eric L. Gressel Memorial Trails* reward the walker with a variety of natural and cultural delights. Visitors may have the pleasure of observing resident and migrating birds and butterflies, as well as native and exotic plants. Wild edibles and cultivated apples coexist with bear, deer, and wild turkey. An ancient trail across the continental divide speaks to the history of humans back to the last Ice Age, and a forgotten graveyard tells stories of early European settlers whose descendants inhabit these mountains today. Vistas include nearby mountains as well as the railroad that brought the Industrial Revolution into once-secluded Appalachian communities.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all who have worked to make the Trails a reality. In addition we would like to acknowledge the generous support provided by the Blue Ridge Natural Heritage Area, Progress Energy, and the many people who made donations in memory of Eric L. Gressel, to the Altapass Foundation, Inc.

## About The Orchard

The Orchard was established more than a century ago by the Holston Land Company, an arm of the Clinchfield Railroad. In a good year, this award-winning orchard produced 125,000 bushels of apples. In the late 1930's the Blue Ridge Parkway took a narrow strip of land through the heart of the Orchard. The current Orchard, with its 2,500 apple trees, remains active and yields 7,000 bushels in a productive year.

In 1995 Katherine Trubey purchased the Orchard's 280 acres in order to preserve its beauty and unobstructed views. Eventually the portion of the land above the Parkway was sold to the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation for preservation in perpetuity. In 2002 a nonprofit organization, the Altapass Foundation, Inc., was established to oversee the natural and historical preservation projects associated with the Orchard at Altapass.

The **mission** of The Altapass Foundation, Inc. is to: **Preserve** the history, heritage, and culture of the southern region of the Blue Ridge; **Protect** the Orchard land with its apples, wetlands, butterflies, and other natural features; and **Involve** the public in the unique Appalachian Regional experience.

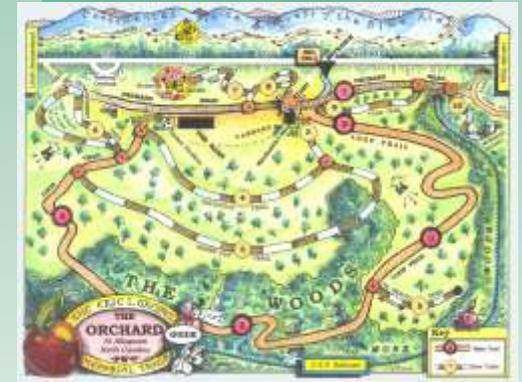


1025 Orchard Rd  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
1-888-765-9531  
[www.altapassorchard.org](http://www.altapassorchard.org)

*The Altapass Foundation, Inc., doing business as the Orchard at Altapass, is a 501(c)(3) public nonprofit.*

## *The Historic Orchard at Altapass*

### *Eric L. Gressel Memorial Trails*



*a partnership between the Historic Orchard at Altapass and the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's Kids in Parks*





**TRAIL LENGTHS**  
(in miles)

- 1: 1.5 (flat)
- 2: 2.0 (hill)
- 3: 0.75 (hill)
- 4: 0.25 (flat)
- 5: 0.4 (flat)
- 6: 0.4 (flat)
- 7: short (hill)
- 8: short (hill)
- 9: 1.0 (flat)
- 10: 0.25 (hill)

*Please report any unsafe conditions to Orchard personnel at (828) 765-9531*

**Visitor Behavior:** All visitors are expected to act with respect and courtesy as permitted guests on private land. Look and enjoy!

- NO collecting or picking (except apples, with purchase of bag)
- NO ladders or tree climbing allowed
- NO hunting
- NO horses, bicycles or motorized vehicles allowed
- Pets must be on leashes