



File Code: 1010

Date: January 10, 2012

Dear Rock Climbing Community,

It's the time of year to welcome back North Carolina's Peregrine Falcons. While the Peregrine Falcon was removed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species list in 1999, it remains listed as sensitive by the Regional Forester and endangered by the state of North Carolina. These designations continue to afford the Peregrine Falcon protection as the Forest Service and partner agencies work to conserve and protect the species.

Eight pairs nested in 2011, five of which were on Forest Service lands. Of the five pairs on the Forest, only three nested successfully, indicating that long-term reproductive success continues to be a concern. Young chicks startled prior to acquiring full flight capability will run off the edge of the cliff attempting to escape the threat. Entry into a closure site after the chicks have hatched but before they can fly will almost certainly cause this response.

Closure of the cliffs where Peregrine Falcons are nesting to climbing activities is necessary to limit disturbance during critical reproductive seasons. Climbers should be aware that both the adults and newly fledged chicks remain in the vicinity of the nest site, and may fly or dive at nearby climbers. It is unlawful to take (kill, harass, or injure, including eggs) Peregrine Falcons and other birds of prey (Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 USC 703-712).

Until such time as western North Carolina can maintain a healthy reproduction rate and successfully raise young Peregrine Falcons, the existing closures will be maintained, posted, and enforced.

Closure areas:

- Whitesides Mountain, Nantahala Ranger District
- Big Lost Cove Cliffs and Linville Gorge (Shortoff Mountain and NC Wall), Grandfather Ranger District
- Whiterock Cliff and Buzzard's Roost, Appalachian Ranger District
- Looking Glass Rock (north face) and Victory Wall, Pisgah Ranger District



Entry into or upon the areas defined above is prohibited between January 15 and August 15. Areas are defined by orange painted boundary or posted signs. This closure is in effect whether or not signs are present. Closure areas and contact information is provided on the attached summary.

Please contact Sheryl Bryan, Forest Wildlife Biologist (sbryan@fs.fed.us, 828-257-4271), with questions regarding these areas or if you would like a copy of the closure notice or maps. This information is also available at the ranger district offices listed on the attachment. Thank you for your continued cooperation with restoration efforts for this magnificent bird of prey.

Sincerely,



DIANE RUBIACO
Acting Forest Supervisor

2012 North Carolina Peregrine Falcon Climbing Site Closures

Site Name	Area Closed	Landowner
Whitesides Mountain	All climbing routes between and including Southwest Arete and Mainline are closed.	USFS, Nantahala Ranger District (828) 524-6441
NC Wall (Linville Gorge)	All climbing routes between and including Tightrope and Bumblebee Buttress are closed	USFS, Grandfather Ranger District (828) 652-2144
Shortoff Mountain (Linville Gorge)	All climbing routes between and including C.O. to and including Paradigm Shift are closed.	USFS, Grandfather Ranger District (828) 652-2144
Big Lost Cove Cliffs	All climbing routes are closed.	USFS, Grandfather Ranger District (828) 652-2144
Looking Glass Rock (North Face)	All routes to the right* of Glass Menagerie and to the left of and including Twisted Laurel on the North Face of Looking Glass Rock are closed.	USFS, Pisgah Ranger District (828) 877-3350
Victory Wall	All climbing routes are closed.	USFS, Pisgah Ranger District (828) 877-3380
Whiterock Cliff	All climbing routes are closed	USFS, Appalachian Ranger District (828) 682-6146
Buzzard's Roost**	All climbing routes are closed	USFS, Appalachian Ranger District (828) 682-6146

* As seen from the base of Looking Glass Rock

** New closure area in 2012

Climbing route names are taken from: Kelley, Thomas. 1995. *The Climber's Guide to North Carolina* 3rd Edition. Earthbound Sports Inc., Chapel Hill, NC 332pp. and from Lambert and Shull. 2002. *Selected Climbs in North Carolina*. 1st Edition. The Mountaineers Books. Seattle, WA. 326pp.

All sites are closed from January 15 - August 15; except that in the event that falcons are not using the site or nesting terminates at an earlier date than August 15th, the site may be opened to public use, as determined by the appropriate landowners. The specified closed (or open) routes will change if the falcons nest on a part of the cliff outside the existing closed area, or if they do not nest in an existing closed area, as determined by monitoring throughout the breeding season.

This summary of climbing-site closures represents the best available knowledge regarding closure orders issued by the U.S. Forest Service and North Carolina State Parks as compiled by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission works in collaboration with the above landowners to recommend closure areas that protect peregrine falcon nest sites and minimize restrictions on climbers. Changes in the specific closures and publication of the notices are the responsibility of the respective landowners.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOREST SERVICE
NATIONAL FORESTS in NORTH CAROLINA,
Appalachian, Grandfather, Nantahala, and Pisgah Ranger Districts

Closure of Select Rock Faces to Climbing, Rappelling, Hang Gliding,
and Similar Recreational Activities to Protect Peregrine Falcon Nesting

Amendment to Order Number 01-02-2004

Pursuant to 36 CFR, Sec. 261.50 (a) and (b) the following acts are prohibited on the areas listed below and further described on the attached list and maps within the National Forests in North Carolina:

It is prohibited to be upon the rock faces (or portions of rock faces as described in the attached table) within the posted boundaries from January 15 to August 15 of each year. Prohibited activities include rock climbing, rappelling, hang gliding, and other recreational activities on the rock faces themselves. Overnight camping within the posted areas is not allowed. Through hiking on designated trails is permitted within the posted boundaries.

This closure is in effect for the protection of Peregrine Falcon nesting sites (36 CFR 261.53 (a)), and is effective January 16, 2012 through January 15, 2013.

Areas to Which This Order Will Apply:

Whiterock Cliff, Madison County, Appalachian Ranger District

Big Lost Cove Cliffs, Avery County, Grandfather Ranger District

Linville Gorge (NC Wall & Shortoff Mountain), Burke County, Grandfather Ranger District

Whiteside Mountain, Jackson County, Nantahala Ranger District

Looking Glass Rock (North Face) Transylvania County, Pisgah Ranger District

Victory Wall, Haywood County, Pisgah Ranger District

Buzzard's Roost, Haywood County, Appalachian Ranger District

Pursuant to 35 CFR, Sec. 261.50 (e) the following persons are exempt from this order:

- (1) Persons with a permit specifically authorizing the prohibited act or omission, and
- (2) Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.

A site not used by falcons or a site where nesting terminates before August 15th, may be opened to public use, as determined by the Forest Supervisor.

Executed in Asheville, North Carolina this 10th day of January, 2012.


for DIANE RUBIACO
Acting Forest Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina

Violation of these prohibitions set forth above is punishable by a fine or not more than \$5,000 for an individual and \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both. See 16 U.S.C. 551, 18 U.S.C. 3559 and 3571.

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* As seen from the base of Looking Glass Rock

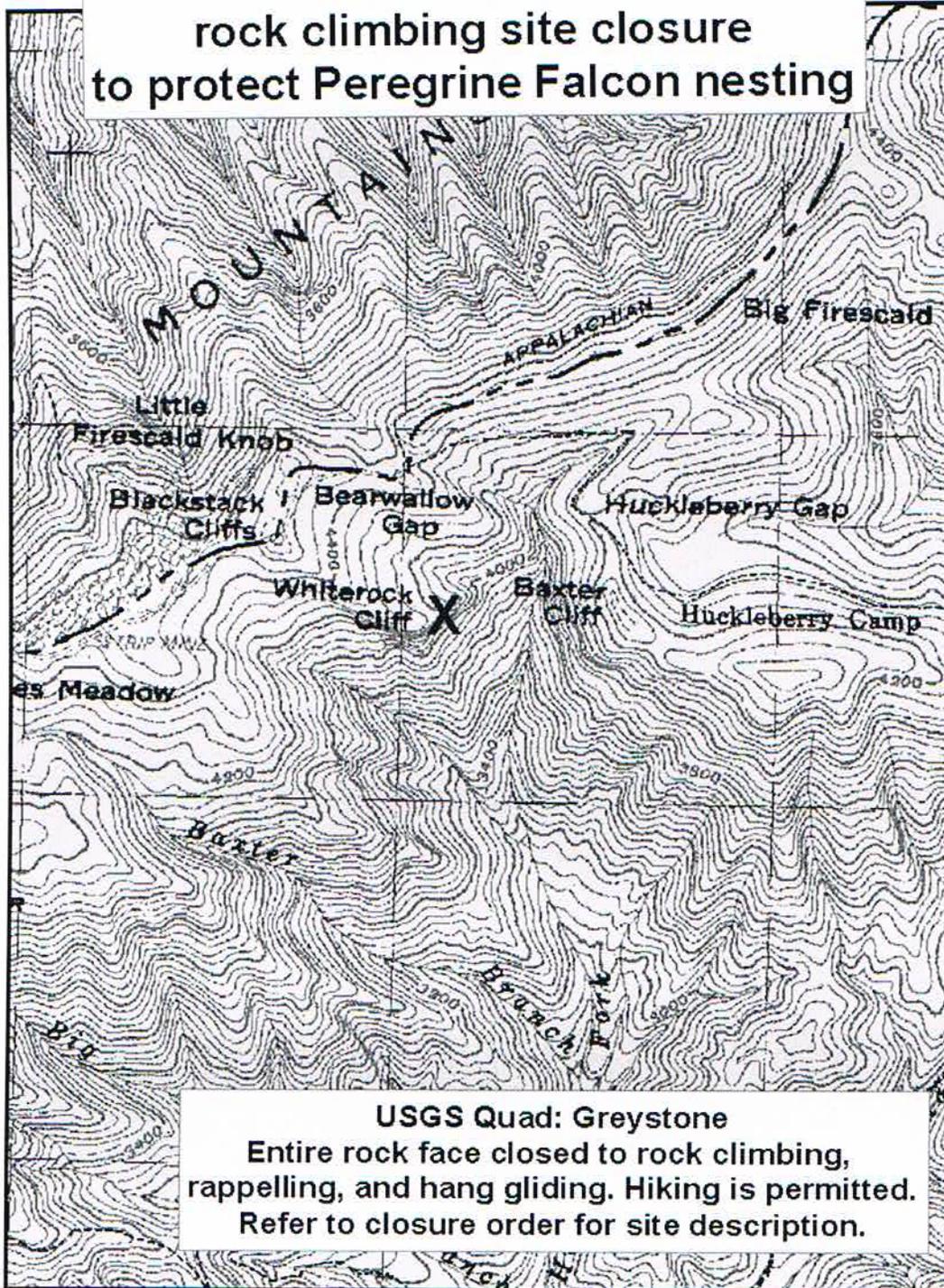
** New closure area in 2012

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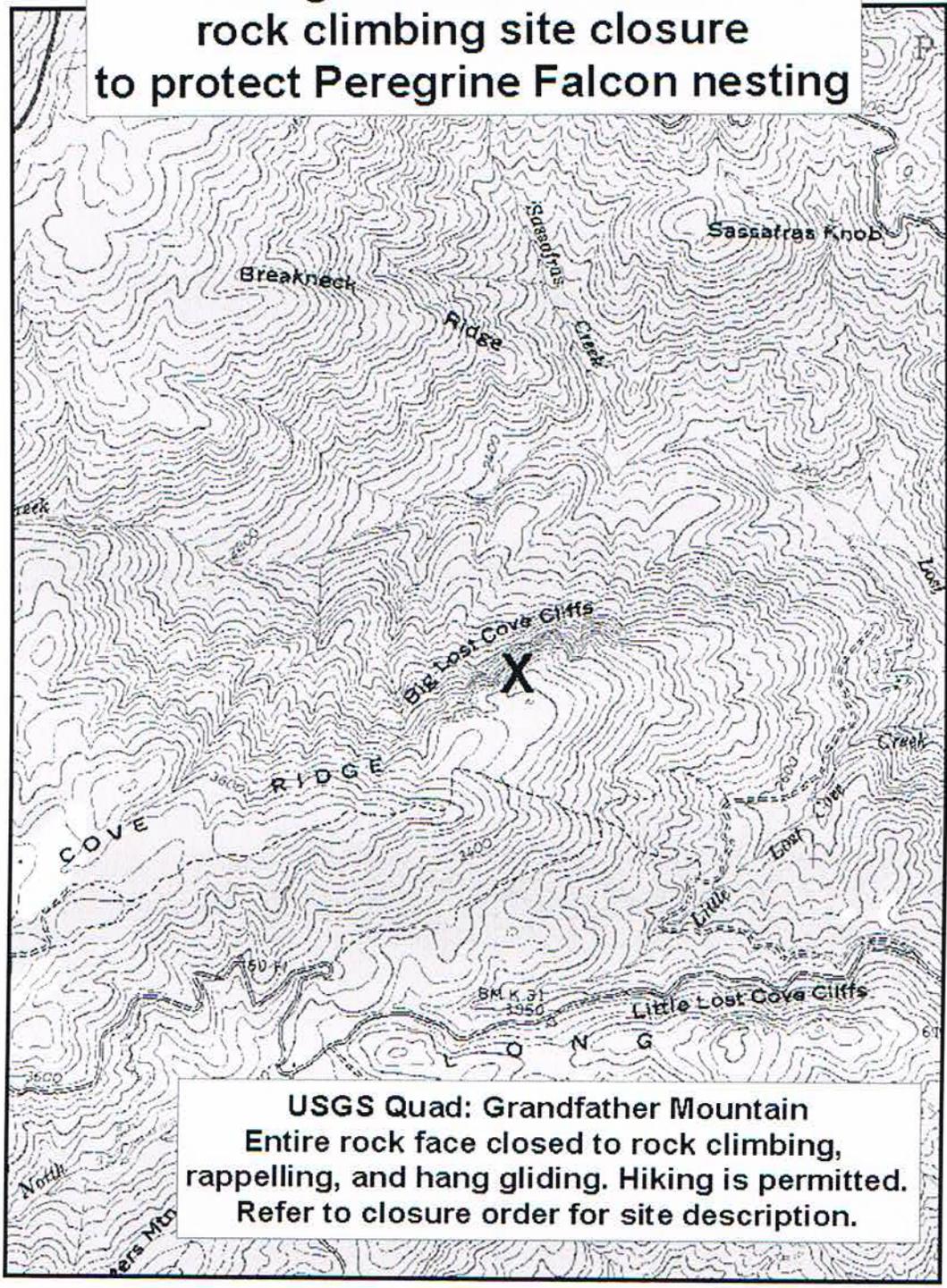
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**Whiterock Cliff
rock climbing site closure
to protect Peregrine Falcon nesting**



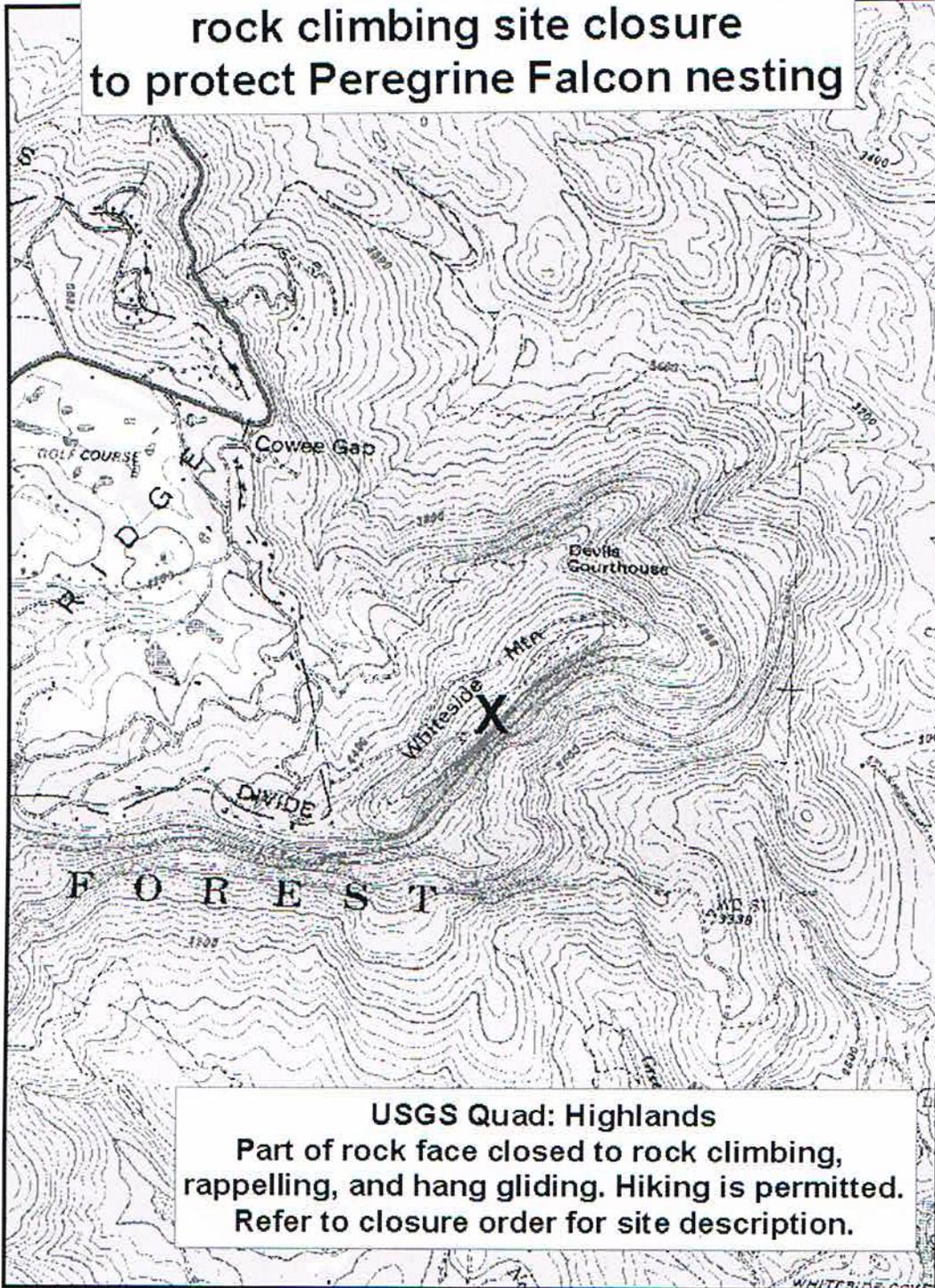
USGS Quad: Greystone
Entire rock face closed to rock climbing,
rappelling, and hang gliding. Hiking is permitted.
Refer to closure order for site description.

**Big Lost Cove Cliffs
rock climbing site closure
to protect Peregrine Falcon nesting**



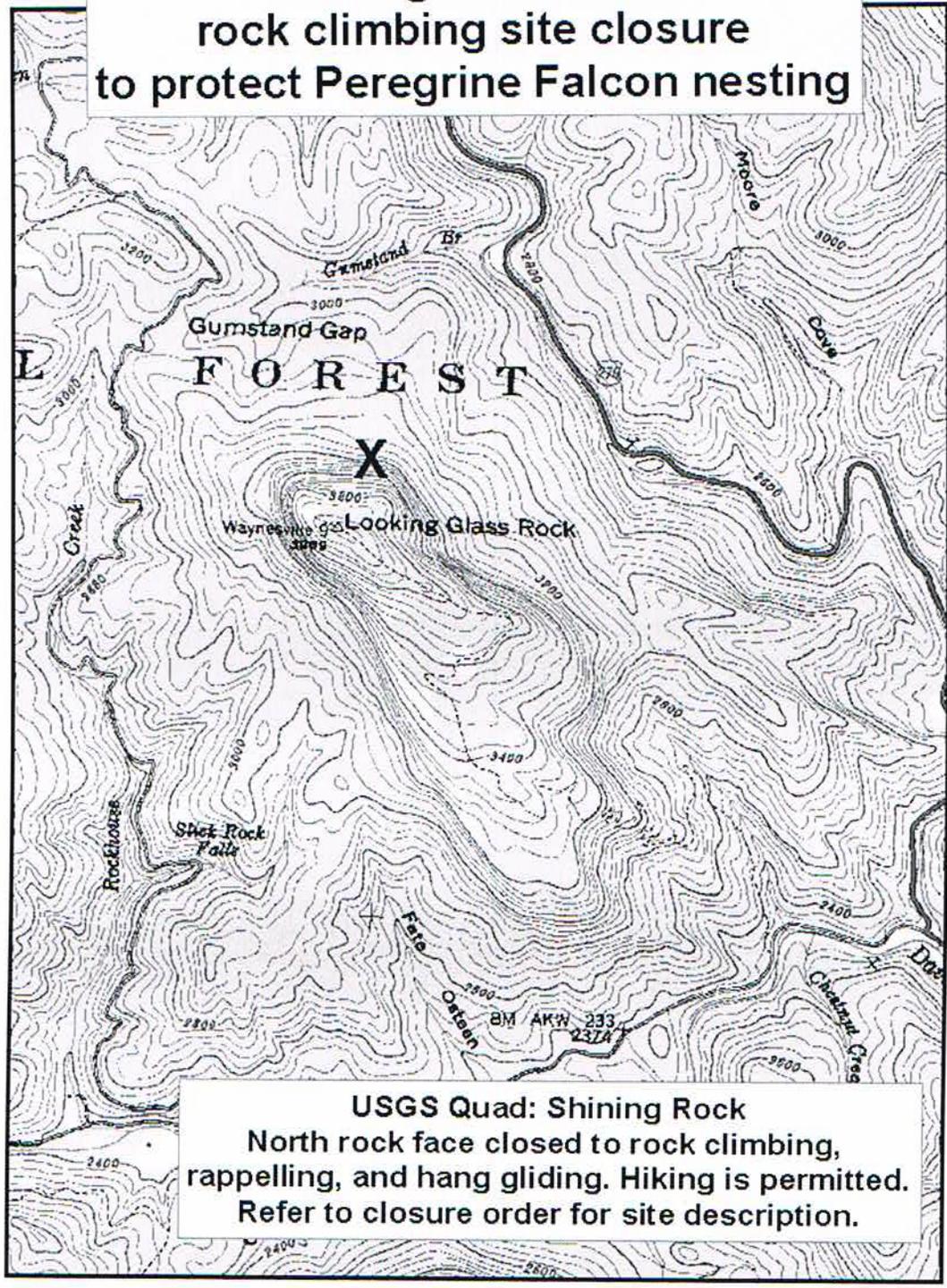
**USGS Quad: Grandfather Mountain
Entire rock face closed to rock climbing,
rappelling, and hang gliding. Hiking is permitted.
Refer to closure order for site description.**

**Whiteside Mountain
rock climbing site closure
to protect Peregrine Falcon nesting**



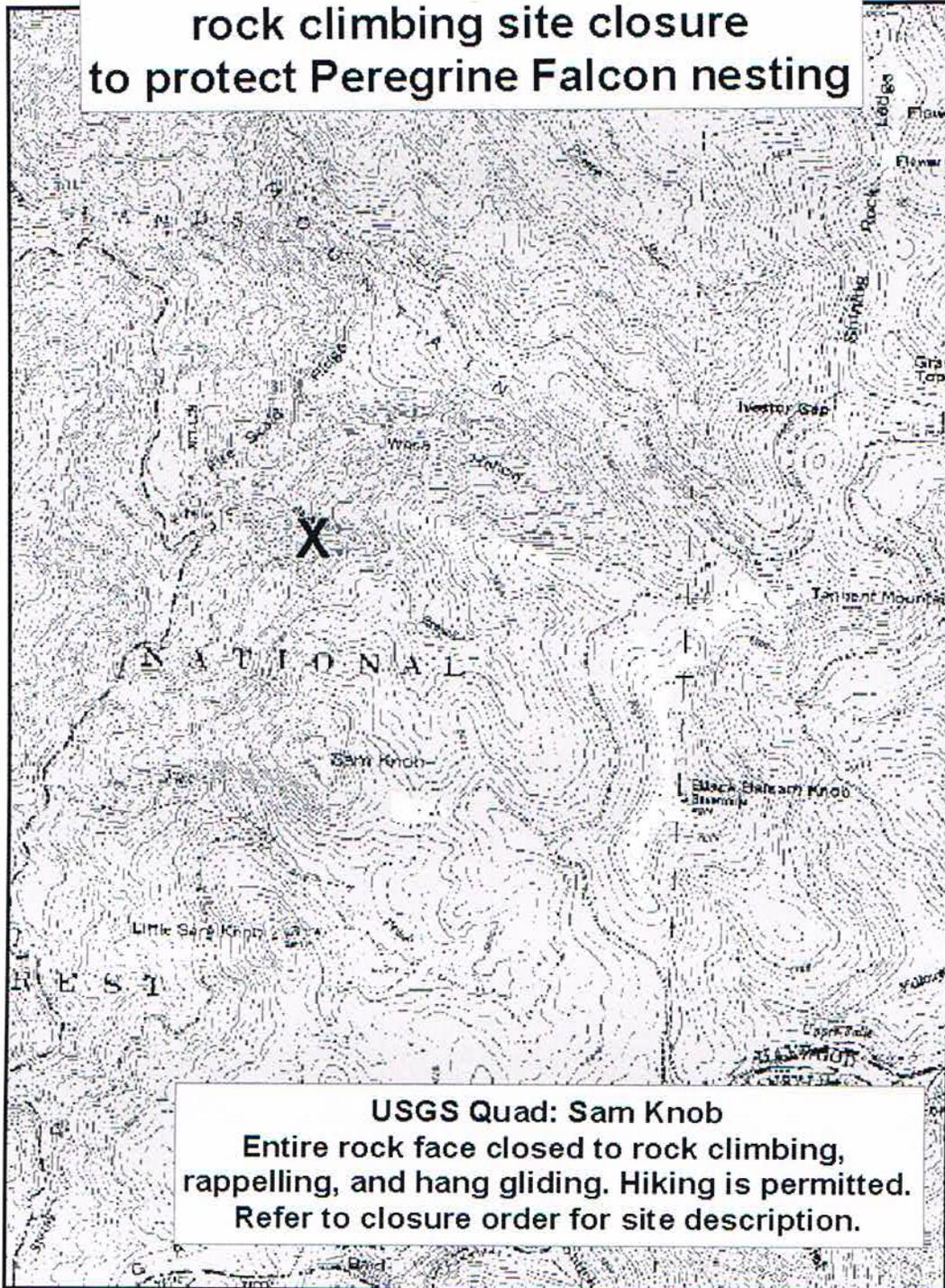
USGS Quad: Highlands
Part of rock face closed to rock climbing,
rappelling, and hang gliding. Hiking is permitted.
Refer to closure order for site description.

**Looking Glass Rock
rock climbing site closure
to protect Peregrine Falcon nesting**



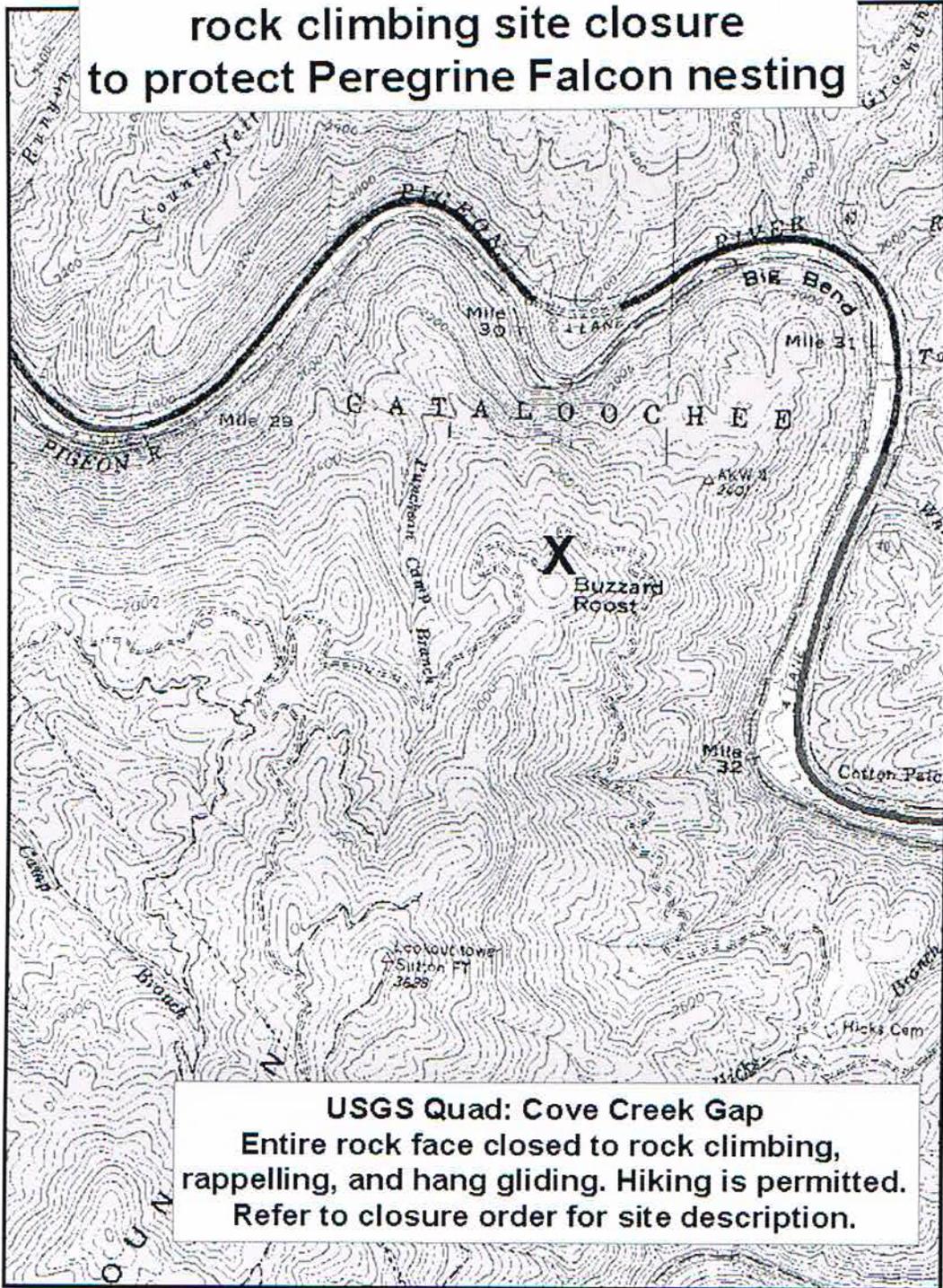
**USGS Quad: Shining Rock
North rock face closed to rock climbing,
rappelling, and hang gliding. Hiking is permitted.
Refer to closure order for site description.**

**Victory Wall
rock climbing site closure
to protect Peregrine Falcon nesting**



USGS Quad: Sam Knob
Entire rock face closed to rock climbing,
rappelling, and hang gliding. Hiking is permitted.
Refer to closure order for site description.

**Buzzard's Roost
rock climbing site closure
to protect Peregrine Falcon nesting**



USGS Quad: Cove Creek Gap
Entire rock face closed to rock climbing,
rappelling, and hang gliding. Hiking is permitted.
Refer to closure order for site description.