BREAKING OUT

Hike Bartram Trail for quiet,

New map unites 7 former sections

By Karen Chávez
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ASHEVILLE — When Tim Warren hikes the 80-mile-long Bartram Trail, hidden in the Nantahala National Forest of Macon and Swain counties, he sees a sweeping resource, rich in history, biological diversity and scenic splendor.

He sees a mighty trail, worthy of seven maps. But who wants to carry seven hiking maps?

For the past two decades, though, anyone hiking the entire trail had to have one map for each of the seven sections of the trail that starts on the North Carolina-Georgia border south of Highlands, snaking through woods, over peaks and across streams, ending at Cheoah Bald.

But now, the North Carolina Bartram Trail Society has created one giant map. The "Interpretive Hiking Map of North Carolina's Bartram Trail" is a full-color, 28-by-36-inch, two-sided map available for sale after Thursday.

"The problem we had with seven maps is they were hard to sell," said Warren, president of the N.C. Bartram Trail Society, which oversees building, maintenance and promotion of the trail. "As we were building the trail north, we'd print another map. That's why it was done in seven sections."

The nonprofit group begun in the 1970s started three years ago to raise the $10,000 needed for a cartographer and printing, including contributions from its 200 members, a grant from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, and donations from the Highlands Biological Foundation, Wilderness Society and the Nantahala Outdoor Center.



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The Bartram Trail runs through the Nantahala National Forest.

"It will be the most accurate map you'll ever find on the Bartram Trail," Warren said. "When the Forest Service wants information on the Bartram Trail, down to tent sites, camp stores and watering holes, they'll go to our map. This was done through our club members and we're very proud of it."

Some of the map's features include highlights such as waterfalls, historic markers and campgrounds; elevation profiles; USGS topographic contour lines at 50-foot intervals; GPS coordinates and driving directions to trailheads; emergency assistance information; and notes on native flora and fauna.

The Bartram Trail generally follows the route of 18th century botanist William Bartram, who detailed his journey in North Carolina in his "Travels of William Bartram," published in 1791. The hiking trail, which also extends for another 37 miles into Georgia, is not Bartram's exact route, Warren said.

"I don't think Bartram traveled the ridge tops. He mostly stayed in the valleys. He was trying to reach the over hill towns of the Cherokee, west of Fontana Lake," Warren said. "But he didn't quite make it. He got to around Cheoah Bald near Robbinsville and turned back. It's hard to comprehend, him traveling by himself, at that time, all that way."

Warren's wife, Ina Warren, a naturalist who joined the group in 1990 and is now a board member, said reading Bartram's "Travels," and then hiking the trail can take people back through time.

"Bartram captured that wild spirit. His is the definitive work on Southeastern Indians and how they lived," Ina Warren said. "We can start getting a glimpse of what life was like back then because he took the time to write it

BARTRAM TRAIL MAP

The new map is available for sale after Thursday at area U.S. Forest Service ranger stations and outdoor outfitters. It may also be ordered online at http://ncbartramtrail.org or mailing a check for $12 to: NC Bartram Trail Society, P. O. Box 968, Highlands, NC 28741.
For more information, e-mail info@ncbartramtrail.org.

solitude

down."

She said at the high point on the Bartram Trail — Wayah Bald — hikers can get a sense of what Bartram saw.

"You see a beautiful expanse of green in the Nantahala National Forest, probably not unlike what Bartram saw," Ina Warren said. "You can see some development, but by and large, it's miles and miles of uninterrupted expanse of forest."

Tim Warren said while the North Carolina Bartram does not have the mystique of the more than 2,000-mile long Appalachian Trail, Bartram is not as heavily traveled or "worn out," and it is his favorite trail.

"It's a solitude trail," he said. "If you want someplace quiet, it's the place to go. It's a trail worth walking."