

## PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT PERIOD OPENS FOR BLRI 2A16 AND 2D17

The National Park Service (NPS), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is initiating an Environmental Assessment (EA) that will evaluate impacts associated with two NPS/FHWA bridge improvement projects. Project 2A16 involves three historic bridges along the Blue Ridge Parkway; reconstruction and rehabilitation work would maintain the historic character of the bridges to the extent possible. Project 2D17 involves a larger historic bridge, Laurel Fork Bridge, which would be designed with consideration given to the historic character of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the original bridge. All four bridges were part of the original motor road construction. The bridges have been deemed structurally deficient with deteriorating decks and substandard height bridge rails. The proposed projects would address structural deficiencies and improve safety by meeting current roadway design standards, including installation of crashworthy railings. The two alternatives being evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA) are "no build" and "replace/rehabilitate".

Project 2A16 involves the following bridges:

- Big Pine Creek Bridge #3, Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 223.78 in Allegheny County, North Carolina
- Big Pine Creek Bridge #6, Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 224.7 in Allegheny County, North Carolina
- Brush Creek Bridge #1, Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 227.45 in Allegheny County, North Carolina

Project 2D17 involves the following bridge:

- Laurel Fork Bridge, Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 248.9 in Ashe County, North Carolina

### Blue Ridge Parkway Project 2A16: Big Pine Creek Bridges #3 and #6, Brush Creek Bridge #1

The preliminary design recommendations are to replace the concrete bridge decks on all three of the bridges along with the bridge railing systems. Existing wood rails and concrete posts would be replaced to replicate the existing rails as closely as crashworthy design allows. The existing stone bridge abutments on all three bridges would be retained along with the existing piers for two of the bridges. In order to increase the hydrologic opening of the third bridge, the design team is considering the option of changing the bridge from a three-span structure to a two-span structure. This would require removal of the two existing piers and replacement with a single pier. Stone from the piers designated for replacement would be salvaged and used as stone facing for the new pier.

### Blue Ridge Parkway Project 2D 17: Laurel Fork Bridge

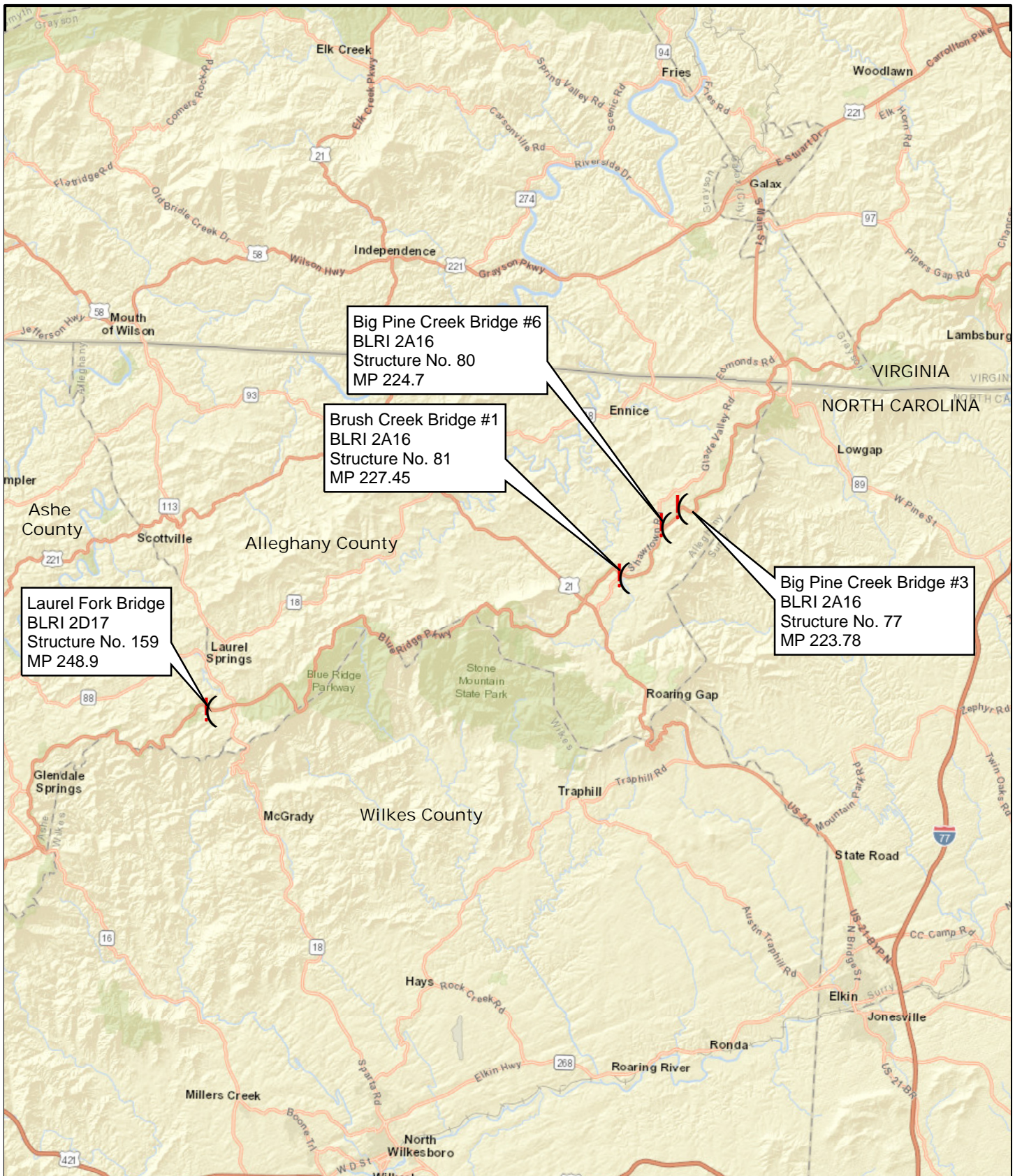
Preliminary design recommendations consist of removing and replacing the Laurel Fork Bridge. Design of the new piers would replicate the existing design as closely as possible. The stone veneer from the existing abutments would be removed and used to create a similar stone veneer for the new abutments. Existing concrete guardrails would be replaced to replicate the existing

rails as closely as crashworthy design allows. Existing stone walls and drainage structures would be replicated as closely as possible to the original.

All work is expected to take place within the existing NPS right of way. The projects would include detour options (likely 15-20 miles). Construction of the bridges is expected to last one to two years. Full road closures associated with each bridge would last throughout the duration of construction.

The NPS and FHWA are seeking comments on the proposed action and its potential impacts. You are invited to review the background information for the project and submit comments through the NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at:  
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkID=355>

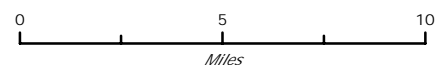
Comments can also be mailed to: Ryan Kimberley, Environmental Protection Specialist, Federal Highway Administration, 21400 Ridgetop Circle, Sterling, VA 20166. To ensure that your comments are included in the process, all comments must be entered or postmarked by September 10, 2018.



Bridge Locations



FIGURE 1  
PROJECT VICINITY MAP  
BLRI 2A16 AND 2D17



Alleghany and Ashe Counties, North Carolina

Sources: NCDOT GIS Unit, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community; FHWA Survey, 2018