

# Vannoy-Blackburn Farm and Historic Preservation 12/3/10

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## Overview

The Vannoy-Blackburn Farm is a distinctive rural historic site in Ashe County now owned by Appalachian State University. Its future intended uses are currently under discussion by the farm's faculty management committee made up of ASU faculty from a number of campus units. While the Goodnight Family Sustainable Development Program will use the farm for teaching and research, other units on campus will also make use of the property. Activities on site could include teaching, outreach and research in anthropology, biology, ecology, geography, geology, history and other academic areas. More research is needed to determine whether this program and multiple uses on this site envisioned by Appalachian State University is comparable to existing programs at other universities; more importantly if it can serve as a national, not just regional, model for such operations

## Executive Summary

This report is a general overview of the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm and its historic resources. It provides some historical background, brief information for all structures on site, and recommendations. For rehabilitation, deconstruction, or any major preservation treatments on these properties, consultation with the Blue Ridge Conservancy as easement holder is essential, and a legal requirement. Appalachian State University should follow best practices of historic preservation including:

- Maintain the high level of historic integrity of existing buildings, avoid new additions to them

- Recognize that agricultural outbuildings are an important component of this cultural landscape
- Propose uses on site that are compatible with highlighting and maintaining this authenticity
- Conduct immediate stabilization of most properties to lessen future rehabilitation costs
- The Vannoy farmhouse should be mothballed immediately before its condition worsens
- The Blackburn farmhouse should be analyzed by a structural engineer before rehabilitation
- Deconstruction of properties should occur only if absolutely necessary, reuse materials on site
- Pursue listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the Blackburn, possibly Vannoy, site
- Public programming such as living history or exhibits is better suited at the Blackburn site
- Historic preservation is the ultimate form of recycling, green practices, and sustainability

### **Immediate Recommendations**

Appalachian State University will need to contract with preservation professionals because of significant adaptive reuse of at least one building on the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm site. A structural engineer to assess the foundations of both farmhouses is the most critical need; additionally an architect can assess interiors of the Blackburn farmhouse for design layout, code compliance, and specific preservation treatments for its conversion to public use. Included in this report are primary recommendations for existing structures on the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm sites (one exterior photograph is included per resource). Those recommendations are based on past review and implementation of Historic Structure Reports as a guide to the adaptive reuse of historic sites, specifically on any known history of the structure, existing conditions, and preservation recommendations.

Historic preservation is most cost efficient, effective, and accurate when future use is determined prior to rehabilitation, to then guide preservation efforts. The determination of use of buildings by the university will help solidify this information, and also likely lower the initial cost of preservation professional services and the larger costs of rehabilitation. It is also likely that Appalachian State University has professionals currently on staff that could be utilized for analysis and report recommendations. Weatherization and/or Moth-balling of existing structures is critical so their condition does not worsen, especially the Vannoy farmhouse. Testing for hazardous materials on site likely will reveal some amount of lead paint in the historic farmhouses; hazards may include chemicals used in the agricultural operations onsite, specifically in the most recent Christmas tree farm use. Soil surveys, wetland surveys, and similar types of environmental surveys are recommended if they have not been done recently. The Office of State Construction should be consulted by the university regarding appropriate building code compliance and procedures. HVAC estimated costs are also an important component to guide future decisions and planning of site uses.

### **Historic Preservation Methodology**

For this report, I have primarily followed the Historic Structure Reports of other rural historic sites as a guide. A Historic Structure Report is completed by an interdisciplinary team of professionals, representing an appropriate array of specialized knowledge and experience with building construction and historic structures. The team, typically comprised of architects, mechanical and structural engineers, and a historian, work together with the client to gain an understanding of the vision for the future of a historic site, as well as current needs and key issues. The project team develops a preservation philosophy to serve as a guide for any future work at the site. The project team conducts historical research, performs a condition survey of the facility sites, and analyzes the buildings for structural integrity, condition of

mechanical systems, interior and exterior condition, historic integrity, and compliance with applicable building codes. Given the cost of such reports, likely from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm in its entirety, I am not recommending such a document be conducted. The dominant emergent theme from visual observations is that there is a high level of original integrity of the existing buildings and the site overall. From that theme is the establishment of a guiding principle: the importance of continuing a number of compatible uses that will not destroy or significantly alter the original fabric of these significant resources.

### **Cultural Landscapes**

Both the Blackburn and Vannoy homesteads exhibit cultural landscape values that are worth protecting. The easements on both properties will assist in doing this, but it is important Appalachian State University also understands this value and protects these landscapes. Ashe County is on the edge of a larger regional area termed “Spersopolis” by the geographer John Fraser Hart. This is defined as new highway side residential patterns developing along rural roads of the South/Appalachian region, a distinctive new settlement system has evolved, with its routes in improved roads during the 1950s (Hart, p. 191, 343). “Most homes are newer dating to the 1990s and 2000s and they mix with the older agricultural homesteads of the region (western Carolinas, northern Georgia, and eastern Tennessee.) Many rural landowners in Spersopolis have been only too happy to sell off small roadside building plots, and an almost continuous necklace of houses lines virtually every paved road in the region, with expensive mansion in unembarrassed proximity to mobile homes and tumble-down, weather-beaten shacks.”

The three principle components of any landscape are landforms or features of the land surface, vegetation, and structures people have added. These structures can further be broken down into houses, sheds, barns, etc. and can also include systems of land division such as fences. The following quotes from “The Rural Landscape” are important to consider regarding fences in the region and on this specific site (Hart, p.188).

“Fences were sporadic in the hills of Appalachia, where the topography is rough, the soils are stony and infertile, and much of the land is steep and wooded. The cultivated land, which produced corn and hay for cattle feed, was concentrated on strips of bottomland along the streams. Little cropland was fenced, because the cattle were fed in barns during the winter and turned onto hillside pastures from May to November. The hillsides, some surprisingly steep, had originally been cleared for cornfields, but they had already lapsed into unimproved pastures of low carrying capacity that were fenced haphazardly with barbed wire, and many showed signs of reversion to brush and woodland.”

“...the Piedmont and some of the less disadvantaged parts of Appalachia actually had more fences in 1993 than in 1953. Many of the steeper hillside pastures in Appalachia have completely reverted to woods that neither need nor warrant fencing, but some landowners have developed extensive cattle-rearing “ranches” in less difficult areas that still are not well suited to crop cultivation. ... Some of the new cattle ranches have been developed by well-to-do city people who use white board or post-and-rail fences to advertise their status. Less affluent people have bought a few acres out in the country where they can keep a horse for the children; they publicize their ownership by erecting white board fences.”

Both the Blackburn and Vannoy sites are located in bottomlands along streams. The second paragraph adequately describes similar landscapes around these two sites.

## **The National Register of Historic Places**

The Vannoy-Blackburn Farm is likely eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and cultural significance in representing a rural farming operation in Ashe County. The structures that would qualify for this listing are the two farmhouse buildings, larger barn, and additional outbuildings over fifty years of age. Likely, the setting itself would be viewed as a cultural landscape and even with existing newer construction on site, would retain these significant and important historic characteristics. Walter Clark, while serving on the board of Preservation North Carolina, suggested this determination previously and I concur. It is the State Historic Preservation Office that makes the true determination of eligibility and a Study List application would be the next step in this process. Likely this site has not officially been previously determined eligible, as a comprehensive architectural survey of Ashe County was completed in 2006, and of the 106 properties determined for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, none indicate the name or location of the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm (Wyatt). Appalachian State University would need to formally request the Study List application if seeking listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Advantages to listing would be for historic recognition, appeal to possible grantors with listing, and as a potential class project for the Historic Documentation class taught by the university. A recent comparable listing on the National Register of Historic Places would include the Perry-Sheppard Farm near Lansing with 7 contributing and 2 non-contributing resources, both cultural and architectural criteria for listing, and a range in the period of significance from 1890 to 1956.

There would be two main concerns regarding eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for this site. The first is whether the existing 1960s ranch house and garage is detrimental to the overall integrity of the cultural landscape of the site. The second is whether any additional new construction is planned on the Blackburn site, significant modern additions to existing buildings, or similar alterations that would have an impact with the site's historic integrity. Related to this concern would be the design and construction of additional parking areas on the site. Currently, the Blackburn site provides a picturesque setting, pastoral views, and view sheds reflective of historic life in rural Western North Carolina. Even with alterations to surrounding vegetation, roadways, and standing utility poles, this authenticity is maintained. The main route of utility poles and wires appears to follow the existing road between the Blackburn farmhouse and the ranch house, which also follows the route of the creek. The primary character of this site remains rural and not suburban, unlike other sites and residential developments in the area. The Vannoy farmhouse has a near replica in architectural style recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the John Miller House near Boone (Johnson and Appendix A). However, the current condition of the Vannoy farmhouse may have severely comprised its historic integrity and it likely could not be considered for listing unless appropriately rehabilitated.

Additional information on family history, historical overview, deed research, and subjects for further research are included at the end of this report as APPENDIX ONE (Early deed map in Appendix B).

## **I-Houses in the Region**

The farmhouses of both the Blackburn property and the Vannoy property fall under a very general architectural description of an "I-House." Descriptions of this property type and its evolution in Alleghany County provide further description of this building form (Sizemore), and examples from

Watauga County are included in the Appendix (Pezzoni). The article by Michael Southern on this style and “The Architectural History of Watauga County” can serve as further resources in defining this property type. It is worth sharing some quotations from the Southern article here.

“Most houses were built neither purely in a folk tradition nor purely in a fashionable style. .... Most houses in North Carolina lie between the two, reflecting the pull of both traditional and popular culture. ... The house type under scrutiny will be Fred Kniffen’s “I-house” – the two-story house at least two rooms wide but only one room deep, with the main entrance on the long side. This house type originated in the English folk culture. It has been identified as the dominant folk house type throughout the Upland South, from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, and as the symbol of economic achievement and social respectability in a democratic agrarian society. Its popularity has been attributed to the fact that it presents to the viewer on the road the largest, most impressive façade possible for a house of only four rooms.” (Southern, p. 71).

“The one feature that could be taken from these plans without disturbing the requirements of the accepted house form was the decorative gable set at dead center on the façade. Tradition was maintained while a certain concession was made to fashion, and a balance was achieved between the two. ... The gables vary widely in proportion and steepness of pitch, and often were given all sorts of machine-made, sawn, turned, and shingled ornament as the nineteenth century wore on. ... The later (19<sup>th</sup> century) house generally retains a more horizontal façade introduced in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. .... For so long the mark of economic success and social respectability, the I-house receded to second rung status. By the First World War it generally died out as a viable building type, replaced by a variety of popular house forms that brought a permanent break with a long-lived building tradition.”(Southern, p.81-82).

Henry Glassie, America’s premier vernacular architecture and material culture expert, has also extensively chronicled the I-house and its variations. He notes that in the Appalachian region the variations of the I-house towards the late 19<sup>th</sup> century begin to return to a more simplistic style, almost more similar to the older hall-and-parlor patterns of rural house construction. He also adds “Up in the blue mountains of the South, people continued to build open houses through the nineteenth century. Their small farms connected along the ridges and creeks into loose communities like Ireland’s. ... They stood in knowing contrast to the I-houses on big farms in the valleys, separating the mountaineers who fought for union from the tuckahoes of the lowlands who fought for slavery’s cause.” (Glassie, *Material Culture*, p. 336).

### **Rehabilitation as Preferred Preservation Treatment**

Thus far, there has not been discovery of original photos of the buildings on site, or even historic photos after they were built or any prior time period. This means that preservation to an original time period of construction is not possible and would be conjectural; rehabilitation is a preferred treatment. Language in the wills of Beulah and Reeves Vannoy state (iii) “to restore and/or renovate the Blackburn farmhouse and any other building of historical significance located on the Blackburn-Vannoy Estate.” Language in the establishment of the Blackburn-Vannoy Foundation also includes (iii) “to restore and/or renovate buildings of historical significance located on the Property.” Likewise, the conservation easement on the property held by the Blue Ridge Conservancy states (iii) “to protect the remarkable late nineteenth century farmstead and any other building of historical significance on the property.” Of the various historic preservation treatments available and defined, “rehabilitation” is the most appropriate for the

Vannoy-Blackburn historic property and is in compliance with this easement language. As defined by the National Park Service, “rehabilitation is the act or process of making an efficient contemporary use of a building or space through alterations, repair, and/or additions while preserving those portions or features that convey historical, architectural, or cultural values.” The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation should also be applied for preservation of the site, and retaining the original fabric of construction to the greatest extent possible (National Park Service – Standards) & (APPENDIX TWO).

Specific considerations include (1) adapting spaces to new compatible uses or retaining architecturally and/or historically significant spaces; (2) repairing deteriorated historic features when possible; (3) replacing historic features when necessary by matching the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials; (4) substantiation of work with documentation; (5) protecting the integrity of the space by making the new work compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and maintaining the hierarchy of spaces; and (6) using the gentlest means possible for chemical or physical treatments.

**Conservation Easement Language for Home Place Tract – “2.3 Existing Improvements” State of North Carolina, County of Ashe, Parcel ID # 15-231-011 Book 274, Page 197, 2/28/02**

Conservation easements prevent subdivision of the farm, while allowing continued agricultural and forestry use of the property. The easements allow scientific and educational use of the property, as well as a historic restoration of the farmstead. At this time, all projected uses of the property and buildings on the property comply with easement restrictions. The easement defines “existing improvements” as:

“A.) the old circa 1880 Blackburn farmhouse, B.) the 1960 brick ranch house with nearby garage, C.) the large old barn southeast of the farmhouse, D.) the springhouse, E.) several small agricultural structures that may be beyond salvage and F.) several woods-roads or logging trails running through the Property. Grantor shall have the right to maintain, remodel, repair, replace or demolish any existing structures, barns, water tanks, water wells, fences, header dams, utilities, and other improvements, and in the event of their destruction, to reconstruct any such existing improvements with another of similar function, capacity, location, and material. Grantor agrees to notify Grantee in writing of plans to remodel, replace or demolish at least thirty (30) days prior to beginning work, and submit to Grantee detailed plans for their approval. Grantor further retains the right to move onto the Property, with similar advance written notice to Grantee, certain older farm structures, contemporary with the Blackburn farmstead, from other properties whose presence, in the opinion of both Grantor and Grantee, may enhance the historic and educational features of the Property.”

This last portion of the easement language would allow for moving other historic agricultural properties to the site, this is however not recommended following current historic preservation standards and practice. Even if significant properties regionally are threatened with demolition, the university should be very careful before creating what is known as a “building zoo” on this site, and damaging its current authenticity. A baseline report was also completed and noted “primary improvements.” Primary improvements to the Property include the brick residence built in 1960 that was most recently occupied by Mr. Vannoy, and the old Blackburn homeplace, which is a “beautiful, restorable, structurally sound farm house built circa 1880. Additionally, four barns of varying sizes, all dating from the period 1880 to 1910 stand near the old home place and appear to also be structurally sound. One small barn has fallen

down and is beyond restoration. There are several additional small structures near the homeplace, including springhouses, woodsheds, and a privy in varying but repairable condition.”

Other past description in easement language states a “ historic complex of buildings around and including the old homeplace, all dating from a narrow period of time and in restorable condition, sits in such a beautiful secluded valley, gives a remarkable view into the world of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the farming culture that built Northwestern North Carolina.”

From these reports, and additional information on file at Appalachian State University and with the Blue Ridge Conservancy, the lettering system used for properties under “Existing Improvements” will be used in this report, with some additions and modifications to record all existing built structures. The Vannoy property will be slightly different in these description notations (Appendix C).

### **The Home Place Tract / Blackburn**

This tract is 157 acres currently accessed off of Windy Hill Road to Catherine Court, a private road; an electronic gate allows entrance into this tract. It has been previously identified with a postal address of 720 and 608 Catherine Court, Fleetwood, NC, 28626 and parcel # 15231-011. (Appendix D) This former Blackburn Farm is surrounded by low wooded ridges with mountains in the distant background. Pastureland makes up roughly 50 acres surrounded by roughly 100 acres of woodlands of various ages. Some of the wooded portions appear to have been mostly logged between the 1940s to 1960s and allowed to regenerate naturally. There is an old growth forest ridge of white oaks, chestnut oaks, and red oaks; with some individual trees that are likely over 150 years old. One corner is marked by a hickory tree that is likely over 200 years old. This old growth forest, with its significant understory and hundreds of larger century old trees is an impressive sight and is valuable as a “living museum”, giving an idea of the substantial regional forests of the past. There is a small creek that runs through the property, and graveled roadways. The new entrance to the site will follow this creek pattern, beginning on Water Tank Road. Elevations range from 3,100 to 3,500 feet above sea level. Open space should be preserved and maintained, specifically the viewing corridors to the Blackburn farmhouse. Total resources consist of the Blackburn farmhouse, ranch house, a family cemetery, at least one ruined structure, and a total of nine additional outbuilding structures on site. The major structures and most minor structures are in remarkably good condition. A list of these structures includes:

A – Blackburn farmhouse – A typical small two-story “I” house with a central hall and a rear kitchen wing addition likely added later. This weatherboard-sided frame house has a three-bay façade and a one-story shed porch. The front entrance also has a front porch with roof likely added later, and an L-shaped rear side porch with roof. The land elevations in the rear portion of the house give the impression that this area of ground was disturbed and removed to construct this addition. Dating from about 1880 according to conversations with a Mr. Vannoy, further study would be needed to confirm the original date of construction of this building. Using comparable exterior examples in regional architecture books, this date is similar and likely is closer to the late 1890s in construction. Comparable examples found in adjacent Watauga County include the Tillman Adams House (Appendix E) and Newton Banner House in the Cove Creek vicinity c. 1889/1890 (Appendix F). Oral history as told to Walter Clark, Blue Ridge Conservancy Director, also indicates that this house, or rather its central interior portions may date to the 1830s; but this seems highly unlikely with visual inspection. There are numerous regional examples of farmhouses dating to this earlier period that continued to expand as farm families grew, the William



Weaver House in Allegheny County listed on the National Register of Historic Places is notable (Sizemore, p. 61). It is possible that a previous farmhouse structure existed in this exact location however, and archeological surveys would be needed to confirm whether there is any evidence of a previous building and its foundation. The second floor plan has likely not changed since original construction, with the exception of a later staircase added when the kitchen was added to provide access to the Back Bedroom on the second floor. Typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century homes, access to at least one bedroom is gained only by passing through other bedrooms, instead of a hallway; and there are no closet spaces. Names for interior rooms in the Blackburn farmhouse are (Appendix G); 1<sup>st</sup> floor: Kitchen, Pantry (Room off kitchen), Dining Room, Lower Bedroom, Lower Level Hall, and Living Room. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Foyer(including Stairway Landing), Left Bedroom, Right Bedroom, Middle Bedroom, Back Bedroom, and Back Stairs. Total square footage is 1842, and the building is the birthplace of Beulah Blackburn Vannoy according to easement documents.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – This structure is in generally good condition. Visual survey of the exterior reveals that much of the original fabric of the building is intact and operable. **Of primary concern is the structural stability of the current foundation, a structural engineer would need to verify the condition and stability of this foundation.** It does not appear that the root systems and branches of small trees and shrubs growing around and into this foundation have significantly comprised its effectiveness, but they should be carefully removed before they continue to grow further in this pattern. There are significant open spaces between the foundation and the frame of the house and evidence of past patch work fixes done with brick and wood that likely are no longer effective. These areas represent a crawl space that may be allowing significant rodents underneath the house, yet these large open spaces probably have also helped lower excessive moisture, rising damp, rising from the ground underneath the house. If a new foundation is required, making sure it has vents will help continue this desirable condition. There is some evidence that a “potato hole” may have existed around the building’s foundation as well. Typically six feet in diameter, and three to four feet deep used for storage in the cool ground around a farmhouse foundation. The areas where the porches attach to the main house frame are of the greatest concern and the front porch clearly is leaning downwards. An assessment of the condition of the brick chimneys, especially the eastern one which appears slightly slanting and detached from the central frame of the house at higher elevations, is also recommended. Handmade brick for use in the chimney was indicated in one past report; it appears much of this original brick material is still a component of this chimney.

A sculpted metal roof was placed on the structure likely in the past eight years; this has made a significant improvement in correcting evidence of previous water infiltration on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Likely there was a metal roof previously on the property from the 1930s or 1940s, which replaced an original wood shingle roof, most likely of chestnut shingles that had deteriorated. An appraisal from 2/15/02 simply indicates a “worn roof” on this structure, prior to this replacement. This building did not have any noticeable gutters and some ground indentations on the façade and front sides of the building would indicate a pooling of water during heavy rains. This is problematic for the health of the foundation of the structure. Extended rooflines of the porch and the steep slant of the main roof assist with water distribution, but it likely is not exiting far enough away from the foundation. **Adding a gutter system with downspouts, screens, and strainers to the building is an important weatherproofing measure to take.** Access to the attic interior and inspection of roof trusses would determine their stability and state of deterioration as well, but these were likely improved or replaced when the metal roof was placed on the building.



Current exterior wood siding exhibits normal signs of weather deterioration, with some areas appearing virtually unpainted due to water staining. The most recent coat of white paint may be anywhere between 40 to 80 years old, and paint analysis would need to be done to determine previous paint colors on the exterior. However, it appears the current wood siding may not be original and more likely dates to the 1920s. This would need further research in comparing with similar properties nearby, exterior materials, and dates of construction. Four-over-four double hung sash storm windows, double hung single pane windows, and primarily original window wood frames are found throughout exterior elevations. Minor repairs are needed to restore the wood siding, trim, windows sills and frames, and door surrounds; all of these wood elements should be scraped and repainted. Storm windows should be installed over the original windows, for those that do not already have these, to improve the thermal efficiency and to protect its original fabric. Wood eaves along the rooflines and plain wood post columns on the porch facade are simple decorative features and appear to be in generally good condition and should be retained. Wood door entrances likely are original or date from the 1920s, at least one door has slight decorative paneling. General exterior rehabilitation should use the broad dates of 1880 to 1925 for a time frame.

Interior walls and ceilings have various wallpaper patterns and styles used over several decades and some slight decorative interior wood detailing around windows and doorways. This interior woodwork is in very good condition on walls and ceilings, and duplication of relatively simple millwork and moldings should not be difficult. The interior stair railing has some additional wood design and detail on the posts and railings. Additional interiors have unpainted wood lath boards, and other sections of replacement wood paneling painted white. Most wallpaper is peeling, in some cases significantly. Electric service installed in the 1950s may have caused minor damage to interior walls. Wood floors are found throughout the house with the exception of the kitchen, likely original or replaced last in the 1920s. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor back bedroom has a significant hole in its ceiling allowing access to the attic, however it did not appear that animal (raccoon) habitation was significant. An earlier report on the property, from an appraisal done on 2/15/02 indicated significant water penetration on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and an overall poor condition in this area. The current interior should be considered in generally good to fair condition.

One possible use is to restore and use this structure as a demonstration of post-Civil War farm life regionally, and from a Proposal to First Citizens Bank by the university; "Renovate and update the historic Blackburn farmhouse to allow for the use of the facility for research and teaching of the history of the region and for the housing and display of artifacts of the 1880's era." An estimated cost of \$60,000 was given for this work in 2007. I would put this estimation as being too low, and closer to \$300,000. This number would fluctuate significantly depending on the level of code compliance required by future use. Building codes exist to protect government and building owners from legal action for issues related to fire and life safety, civil rights violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act or any other civil rights violations related to safety and buildings. Therefore, each of the buildings on the Vannoy-Blackburn property in active public use will need to meet basic code criteria. Most of the areas of non-compliance relate to universal accessibility standards, among them entrance, parking, inter-floor accessibility, seating, and restroom requirements. International Building Codes are the basis for the North Carolina Building Code, which has recently adopted amendments that will become effective on 9/1/2011. As Appalachian State University already goes through the Office of State Construction regarding code and accessibility buildings requirements, discussion early in this process is warranted, after building use and spatial organization is determined. At a minimum, with an increased public use of this property and 1<sup>st</sup> floor spaces, accessible design should be implemented to the fullest extent possible, including an

accessible route from a designated parking space to the first floor of this farmhouse, and at least one interior room converted to an accessible bathroom. Testing for hazardous materials is likely to reveal some amount of lead paint, a complete hazardous material survey and analysis should be conducted for the whole site prior to any rehabilitation work.

Past notes prior to the university's purchase suggest "Complete a structural survey of the small old house, research its history, then stabilize it through repair of roof leaks, board up windows and doors, etc." (Appalachian State University – Cole). This is also stated in an earlier version of conservation easements to "protect the remarkable late 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead." The building is in very good condition from visual inspection, but investing in its rehabilitation would not be advised until a report is generated by a structural engineer on the foundation's condition. The roof appears to have been recently replaced and is functioning well. These two items are the most important features for maintenance and future occupancy of this building. This building was lived in, at least sparsely, up until 2005 by a Billy Groeben, who was a site manager and employee of the Blue Ridge Conservancy. He lived in this historic home and also raised 10 Jersey dairy cows on site and made use of additional existing out buildings.

Finally, installing HVAC systems also plays a significant factor in an estimated cost. If collections will be placed on the interior of this building requiring temperature and climate control, then an appropriate system would need to be researched and recommended. Whether a proposed museum or exhibit would have year round or primarily seasonal usage also factors into this decision. The property currently does not have air conditioning or heating controls, furnaces or a hot water heating system depends also primarily on anticipated use. University faculty or students could perform an energy efficiency or similar audit for this building and assess options and costs in this regard. The water pump in the rear of the building is operable; on the interior an upgraded system would likely be needed.



B – Ranch house – was built likely in the early 1960s, the building was used within the last few years by a caretaker for the property. Total square footage is 1736 in the first floor (Appendix H) and has rooms defined in its interior as Bath, Bedroom (s)(3), Closet(s)(5), Kitchen, Laundry, Living Room, and Pantry.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS- this property appears in good to excellent condition. Its recent occupancy has kept it in immediate habitable condition. Working heating/cooling, plumbing, water and electricity is confirmed; though all systems may require upgrades with increased and continual use of the building. The planned use for this building is to “house three to five sustainable development majors who will help manage the property.” With their future occupancy, additional maintenance issues can be observed and addressed, but this is not expected to be substantial. There did not appear to be evidence of mold on the interior, though with use as a student residence this should be explored further. There also may be code compliance issues to be addressed before occupancy. The building sits on a cement slab foundation with a slight crawl space and appears to have had a roof replacement of asphalt composite shingles within the last ten years, thus the main structural and moisture concerns have been addressed. Gutters and eaves appeared functioning and not clogged, though observation during rain should confirm this, and also whether the exit point for water is far enough from the building. Many gutters terminate underground and it is unclear whether they are draining efficiently, on the western elevation there are indentations in the ground indicating some pooling of water. There is some flaking of brick and paint on wooden window eaves and roof eaves. The central brick chimney has a metal bracing unit at its top portion in addition to flashing and it is unclear if this was a temporary or permanent measure for stabilization. The running bond brick veneer construction appears sound and doors and double hung storm windows functioning properly. This building would be classified as a non-contributing resource to a potential nomination of the site to the National Register of Historic Places; yet it does not detract from the larger cultural landscape values that the property holds.





B.2 – garage – appears to have been built at the same time as the ranch house, likely in the early 1960s.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS** – Brick is identical to the ranch house and similar composite asphalt shingle roof, gutters, and overall appearance. The four-paneled garage door with windows appeared operational, as did an additional door entrance. The two windows on the west elevation of the garage had white wooden trim and were operable. The building sits on a raised cement slab or concrete foundation. A significant amount of items are currently stored in the garage, including horse saddles. This building offers flexibility for its future use in storage, as a staging area, or a classroom and lab. There is currently no water, ventilation, or heating systems in the garage; an electric system is workable but the future use of the space will determine at what effective capacity. Vegetative growth surrounding the property is not significant, but should be removed in the rear elevation of the building at a minimum to prevent further concerns. This building also would not be considered as “historic”, but due to its size, scale, and location does not detract from the overall cultural landscape of this site. The J10 Jeep “farm truck” in front of the garage should be removed and does detract from cultural landscape values on the site. There are wooden fences, largely covered by existing vegetation, around two elevations of this building and the ranch house. These could likely be uncovered and highlighted to enhance the visual appeal of this section of the property.



C – Large Barn – is given a date of construction from 1880 to 1900, this is believed to be accurate compared to similar barn structures in the region and is likely closer to the date of 1900. There are portions of exposed logs where a cutting date could be determined through dendrochronology. Original use may have been for sheep, but it seems more likely the primary use in its history has been for cattle. There is a stand-alone structure east of the building that was likely used to weigh and/or brand livestock. In some respects, this barn shares a few similarities with the enlarged and augmented log cribs of southwestern Virginia and East Tennessee which became standardized into a new type of barn, a “livestock feeder barn” or “transverse crib barn” with lean-to side sheds as defined by the vernacular architectural historian Henry Glassie. Ultimately though, the time period of this barn would have been decades after the trial and error period for this unique property barn type.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – this frame structure has a central aisle and stalls on the ground floor, hayloft above, and side sheds. The utilitarian side-gabled with elongated shed roof building is primarily constructed of unpainted weatherboard with some replacement portions of more recent wood panels. The central barn bay door is on rollers, and this feature should be maintained. A portion of the north-facing roof had a fragment of original chestnut-shake roofing; this may still exist under the sculpted metal sheet panels that currently serve as the roof and were likely placed on the structure and on top of portions of the original roof within the last eight years. A report from the early 2000s indicates this structure is “too deteriorated for salvage or repair.” The current condition appears to be poor to fair, but not “beyond repair.” Stabilization is important in barn structures, especially ones actively used. The side and rear exterior walls do not appear heavily slanting, but with original wood construction a structural engineer should assess this current condition. The front sloping wall and roof however have a noticeable slant; this may be due to the storage of hay and an added weight load on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the interior in this portion. A structural engineer would need to determine whether a new foundation is needed, or if sills and plates need to be repaired or replaced. Often the whole exteriors of barns are tied with cables to hold into the structural system securely. There also is a temporary tarp covering a portion of this roof, which is a temporary solution to the larger need of a stronger metal roof portion in this area. Rainwater is probably draining effectively from this roof, but due to past roof ineffectiveness the interior portions of the barn are more deteriorated in this northern portion. An assessment of the roof’s wooden framing system including joists, beams, braces, posts, rafters, and trusses is also warranted; though this deterioration appears to be minimal. Barns make no effort to conceal their structural systems due to their utilitarian purpose, and this example is no exception. Wholesale replacement of the historic structural system with a different system should be avoided unless deemed necessary by a structural engineer. There is no evidence of a powder post beetle, ant, termite, or similar insect infestation. Past easement language indicated this barn should be “immediately” stabilized, some amount of stabilization has taken place in the past eight years, likely when the roof was replaced, on the structure. If this barn is intended to be used in the future for livestock then greater steps should be taken for its further stabilization. The existing exterior and interior features of the structure can easily be retained; most wooden partitions, stalls, and storage bins appeared in good condition. Electric service is currently operable in the barn and a utility pole with meter is found near the northern façade of the building. No heating or ventilation systems were observed in the barn. Wire fencing is found around the rear elevation of this building and should be removed, unless it will serve a future livestock holding purpose. In future use, soil and manure buildups against the foundation should be removed, as they hold water and snow against wood and promote rot and insects. Given this structure sits on the highest



elevation in this tract, adding a lightning rod is also warranted. Due to the size and potential fragility of the roof, electric heating tapes and snow guards might also be considered on this and other outbuildings.





D – spring house – likely dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and in very good condition, the building has a shed roof and what is likely an original wood door. The structure currently has an asphalt shingle roof with metal top and much of the wood appears to also have been replaced, roughly in the 1960s.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – past easement language indicates this building should be “immediately” stabilized, but its current condition does not warrant such action. Upon visible inspection it appears structurally sound and could continue to be used for storage, and possibly an active use for agricultural storage. There is a metal pipe underneath and adjacent to the springhouse where water flows from the creek beside it. The fluctuation of this water level determines whether there is an additional threat to this property and its foundation and lower level, but this does not seem likely. This building should be retained and utilized in its current location, and would be a contributing resource to a potential National Register listing for this site. A pile of cinder blocks and wood tree blocks near this building could be utilized at other areas on site or stored for future use.





E.1 – granary – likely dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and likely closer to 1900. Use as a small granary is an educated guess based on the higher roofline, access to the interior would likely confirm historic usage. Given its distance from the main house and construction shape, this structure might also be a carbide-lighting or carbide-light house. Exploring what that property type was, why, and when would be an excellent research project for a student in Public History, and might warrant accompanying public interpretation.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS** – in generally good condition, the slight amount of brush and vegetative growth around the base of the building should be cleared entirely. There is at least one tree that rises above the roofline of this building and whose branches and roots may have an impact on the future structural stability of the building, as these branches are also found growing within the interior. This would need to be confirmed and a decision made on its removal or not. The wooden boards are arranged in a pattern similar to the Large Barn and its construction likely is around the same time, the newer roof of sheet metal attached to original wood eaves is also similar to the Large Barn. It is a smaller structure so stabilization is less of a concern, and it could serve for grain storage or other agricultural storage purposes. The current interior has a small amount of agricultural equipment and materials, including those which may be considered hazardous and these should be disposed of properly. There is a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level on the interior of wood and the weight load and capacity of this level would need to be tested before additional storage use. Utility wiring connects the granary with the Blackburn farmhouse and there may be an active light switch in the interior.





E.2 – outhouse – dating from early 20<sup>th</sup> century likely, may have been disassembled and reconstructed from nearby site in past 100 years.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS - in generally good exterior condition, it appears to have been moved from a previous adjacent location as is typical for outhouse buildings. The amount of small tree branch growth on the rear elevation is minimal, and this can likely be broken off and removed without damaging the exterior. This structure could be used for living history interpretative purposes. There are a few historic sites that utilize their outhouses as working bathrooms for authenticity, but this is not recommended. The shed roof and horizontal wood construction is common for this building type.



E.3 – chicken coop – likely dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, best guess at its historic use also referred to as a “chicken house”.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – the building is significantly deteriorated and in poor condition. Thick brush reaches the roofline on this structure and may have compromised its base and wood construction. After this vegetation is removed, a further visual inspection would be needed and likely the building could be used for storage after strong stabilization efforts. There is some collapse of upper floor boards, but deconstruction should be considered only for liability or safety reasons. In this scenario, the wood could be reused in other buildings on site. The metal roof on this building has not been recently replaced, unlike other outbuildings on site. This outbuilding, even in its current condition, would be considered a contributing resource to a National Register listing and the cultural landscape. Removal may be necessary once vegetation is removed, but only if it is determined structurally unsound.





E .4 – pig barn – likely dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this is an educated guess at its historic use, may also be known as a “hog house” or “hog barn.”

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – in a deteriorating and poor condition. Thick brush reaches the roofline and some upper floor boards appear to be in a state of collapse. This structure could be deconstructed and the wood material reused, or allowed to remain in place for storage of material that does not need to be strongly secure. The metal roof has not been recently replaced like other outbuildings. This outbuilding, even in its current condition, would be considered a contributing resource to a National Register listing and the cultural landscape. However, its removal may be necessary once vegetation is removed and it is determined structurally unsound.



E.5 - wagon shed – likely dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Use is determined by current storage of wooden wagon and wagon wheels on its interior.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – smaller frame structure in fair condition. It has a newer metal roof, replaced likely at the same time as the barn. The items that currently exist in the interior could remain for interpretative purposes or be removed for this building to be used for storage adjacent to the barn. There appears to be a slight slant on the eastern facing exterior wall, but overall the building appears stabilized. The open window bay on the northern elevation may also indicate a horse was housed here in the past. The wooden boards are set vertically without the similar detail found on the Large Barn. Wire fencing is found around much of this building and should be removed, unless it will serve as a future livestock pen.





E.6 – Barn Ruins - collapsed outbuilding away from central site, believed to be a former smaller barn structure, maybe this was used for sheep. Likely constructed in the early 1900s.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – for liability and safety reasons this structure should be further collapsed and the material reused on site. While worn down structures on the landscape are part of the cultural history and importance of a site, this building is further removed from the other outbuildings and has reached a state of being “too far gone.” Easement language indicates “all collapsed buildings and old fences should be removed.” Exhibit C in the easement also noted “four existing barns on site, including one already collapsed”; it is assumed the document was referring to this structure. With considerable effort the walls could be returned and a new roof placed on the building, but only if a use is determined. The barbed wire fencing on the property if serving a future purpose could be retained; there also exists wood fencing in some portions which should remain.



E.7 Collapsed Wood Materials – unable to determine whether these wooden boards were part of an existing building on site or recently dissembled. It appears they are on top of a small garden plot, and these materials can be reused on site and stored in the storage shed if replacement wood materials are needed for immediate repairs to additional outbuildings in the future.





E.8 Storage Shed – likely dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this building has had a replacement metal roof attached to its wood eaves likely in the 1960s. Most likely was used historically as a wood shed.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – the horizontal weatherboard planks appear in fair to good condition. The building’s southern elevation is an open bay that currently houses agricultural equipment and metal containers. This property can be left in its current condition and location and utilized for storage. The open bay can be covered with a tarp or similar temporary storage measure for protection of stored items. The building currently stores agricultural equipment and containers, and what would appear to be an upper millstone with traditional deep grooving. It would not be unusual to suppose a small grain milling operation took place on site, in the nearby granary building.





F – roads & trails – primarily dirt and gravel trails exist on the property; most may date to the logging operations on the property from the 1940s to the 1960s.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – An assessment of existing roads and trails should take place after the new entrance road is implemented. Also gauging an estimate on the amount of projected use on existing roads and their conditions to help determine preservation efforts if any. Roads & trails are also considered cultural landscape features as part of the site’s history.



G – cemetery – this roughly 60 foot by 10 foot plot of land has a dozen headstone and grave markers specific to the Vannoy and Blackburn families. Most prominent are the most recent modern headstones that say “Vannoy” and “Blackburn.” It is surrounded by a modern chain link fence with locked gate.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – the current vegetative growth does not have a major impact on the appearance and conditions of headstones. \$40,000 was set aside in a family will for the “upkeep and maintenance” of this family cemetery. The cemetery is a contributing historic resource to this site and should receive minimal to no alterations.



### ***The Phillips Road Tract / Vannoy***

The Phillips Road Tract consists of two contiguous parcels that form a long narrow tract of 188 acres lying along Dick Phillips Road and south of Will Vannoy Road, about one mile to the east of The Home Place / Blackburn Tract. Magazines and publications currently within the building identify the address as Route 2, Box 61, West Jefferson, NC 28694 (likely no longer accurate), and as parcel #'s 15231-071 and 15271-022 (Appendix I) . This tract contains Mr. Reeves Vannoy's birthplace, which is a small frame house on Dick Philips Road. This house and its four associated currently standing outbuildings are in poor condition. These buildings are along the roadway and the house sits at a T-shaped road intersection with a modern bridge eighty feet from its facade. Seasonally this road beyond the bridge has a locked metal gate on it with a "Road Closed" sign. Telephone lines and poles roughly follow Dick Phillips Road, including through portions of the Vannoy tract. It should be noted that the eastern entrance of Dick Phillips Road from Rock Quarry Road is gravel, narrow, and may be difficult to traverse in the winter. There also is a land and lot with standing structures currently available through Weichert Realtors adjacent to the Vannoy property. Further west on Dick Phillips Road is a straight section of gravel road with an additional adjacent home site with both historic and modern structures; this area has a gated chain fence. This road continues for roughly 1.5 miles in winding pattern and culminates at Old Water Tank Road. Near this entrance is a modern home with the address of 288 Dick Phillips Road, the former historic Oval Merchant building, and the commercial building of Winebarger Upholstery. Roughly .5 miles further north on Old Water Tank Road three additional buildings associated with the Vannoy property can be viewed from the roadway. These buildings are in current use for agricultural purposes by a local property owner, not approved by Appalachian State University as new owner, and a situation that needs resolution.

The Vannoy tract is primarily wooded, having regenerated naturally after logging in the 1950s and 1960s, though about 36 acres was recently planted to Fraser fir Christmas trees in the past decade. The past Christmas tree farm operation, ran by Cline Church Nursery, has had an impact on the landscape and is currently recovering. Past horse riding and ATV use may also have had an impact according to easement documents. The current Cline Church Nursery and Christmas tree farm remains located near this site in Fleetwood, NC and may have additional information on this land. The wooded portion of the Phillips Road Tract consists primarily of oaks, yellow-poplars, and white pines, though there is great diversity in the stand. This is an excellent, diverse forest tract, offering a variety of habitats for many species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians that inhabit such areas in the southern Appalachians. This area falls to the east towards the South Fork of the New River, and has beautiful views from its upper portion. One adjacent property owner and their modern house, garage, and additional buildings can be seen from this elevation as well. Elevations range from 3,000 to 3,400 feet above sea level.

### **Conservation Easement Language for Phillips Road Tracts – 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph "Primary Improvements" State of North Carolina, County of Ashe, Parcel ID # 15-231-071 & # 15271-022 Book 274, Page 228, 2/15/02**

"The existing improvements include A.) the old circa 1910 Vannoy farmhouse B.) several small agricultural structures, including sheds and barns that may be beyond salvage C.) a small rock quarry, no longer in use, approximately 100 feet wide by 40 feet long D.) a concrete foundation used for crushing rocks mined from the quarry during its time of operation and E.) several woods-roads or logging trails running through the Property."



Primary improvements to the Property noted in the Baseline Documentation/Exhibit C include (i) a small barn currently used as a staging area for Christmas tree operations on the 96-acre tract, (ii) several other small agricultural structures, including sheds and barns that may be beyond salvage, (iii) several woods-roads or logging roads, (iv) a concrete foundation used primarily as a rock crusher for a rock quarry formerly located on the Property, (v) a small rock quarry approximately 100' wide by 40' long, and (vi) the old Vannoy two-story family homeplace. In addition there is a relatively new flat roofed barn near Water Tank Road, with nearby a dilapidated small house used for storage and a dilapidated shed.

The primary conservation values of the property are the rural farm landscape, the recovering 150 acres of mixed hardwood and pine woodland, and the historic farmhouse. The protection of the landscape, the woodland, and the farmhouse is valuable to both the aesthetics of the land and its cultural history. Early interpretations of the easement indicated that it did allow 2 buildings of new construction with 2,000 square feet envelopes, this would need to be verified as accurate and Appalachian State University would need to determine a specific use for these buildings if constructed. The numbering system for resources (Appendix C) used in "primary improvements" in the Phillips Road Tract / Blackburn is utilized here in a similar manner with some additions, as follows:

(i)Small Barn – this building likely dates to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was most recently used as a staging area for Christmas tree operations. The property is located on a far corner of this land tract where pasture turns into forest, there are dirt roads surrounding this building also.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS** – this smaller barn building has a slanted shed roof and open bay on its façade. It most likely was utilized for the storage of feed for livestock, as it is located on the edge of pasture. The wood paneling of the building is vertical and with slight spaces in between boards, which is unlike any other agricultural outbuilding on site. There is a noticeable slant in the roof and the more recent metal roof is unattached in some portions. The instability of this roof is contributing to the building's current structural issues and is overall in poor to fair condition. Stabilization of this property is recommended as it contributes to the cultural landscape of this site. Though currently surrounded by Christmas trees from the previous Christmas tree operation on this portion of the property, it is an integral building that highlights the transition between pasture to forest.



(ii.1) agricultural outbuildings – larger barn – likely dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Given the wooden fence on the building’s west elevation and interior structural layout it seems likely this was used as a sheep barn, and not the Blackburn property barn used for this purpose as was stated in other easement documents. There appears to be a corn crib at the center of this structure, with the barn framing simply built around it, as was common in the region. “Mark Monroe: an East Tennessee Pioneer and His Corn Crib” is an interesting publication on this resource type and its distinct importance regionally. Insulators can be found on the roofline of the structure indicating wiring, electricity, and lighting at one time.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – “the several farm structures are so dilapidated as to be worthless” is the language used in the easement. The current condition of this building would be considered poor and possibly is in imminent danger of collapse due to several factors. Most notably is the weight of either original or replacement metal roofs on the frame of the building, there also is a clear portion that is gone and now covered by asphalt strips and tattered strap coverings. Also significant is the amount of vegetative growth on the southern elevation of the building, which is potentially pulling this wall downward. If this building is to be used it is in need of immediate stabilization, any significant additional weight of snow and ice in the coming winter has the potential to collapse it. On the interior is original wood floorboards, brackets, and eaves; the exterior is primarily unpainted weatherboard in both horizontal and vertical patterns. The interior also contains agricultural supply items and equipment. The building has a definite slant in its current condition, and a structural engineer would be needed to determine how to correct this. However, unless a specific future use of this structure is determined these efforts may not be warranted and the building could be purposely collapsed for safety and liability reasons. This material can be utilized for future repairs on other outbuildings.





(ii.2) agricultural outbuildings – smaller barn – likely dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS - “the several farm structures are so dilapidated as to be worthless” is the language used in the easement. This building is in fair to poor condition, but salvageable. The original or replacement metal roof on the structure appears balanced on the frame and not weighing down the structure. The unpainted weatherboard also appears in fair condition, as does interior wood floorboards and eaves. Vegetation surrounding the building is a significant problem, and should specifically be removed in its western elevation before this condition worsens. The current interior configuration indicates it was used to house animals, possibly a horse, and currently contains agricultural supplies and garbage. Continued use for storage is feasible in this structure, and it can likely be shore-up and stabilized easier than the larger barn structure nearby.



(ii.3) agricultural outbuildings – shelter - likely dates from the 1950s or 60s.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS - “the several farm structures are so dilapidated as to be worthless” is the language used in the easement. Unlike all other agricultural outbuildings, this structure is made of cinder, cement, or concrete block and not wood. It does have interior wood framing and a wooden shed roof with modern metal covering. It appears likely that this building would have initially had unpainted weatherboard on its exterior, but this was replaced by the more solid block material later. While this structure may not be considered historically significant, it is an existing building and should be retained in its current location. This lends to the impression of the site being a working farm and retaining at least a few of the outbuilding that used to exist on site, from various time periods. An original wooden door exists on the western elevation and the eastern elevation has an open entrance. The building could continue its use for storage, currently sheltering garbage and farm equipment, and likely of more sensitive or fragile materials given its sturdy construction.





(ii.4) agricultural outbuildings – collapsed building – likely dates from the 1920s or 30s. The wooden material and metal roof of this structure sits in a pile at the T-shaped intersection of the Vannoy tract.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – this material could be stored for potential reuse for other agricultural building repairs or replacements on site.



(iii) wood roads and logging roads – primarily dirt and gravel trails exist on the property; most date to logging operations from the 1940s to the 1960s. Those that were constructed for the most recent use as a Christmas tree farm likely were on the same paths of these previous road uses.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – These roads are those within the boundaries of the property, they are not the local government maintained roads that outline portions of the property. These roads appear to be extensive throughout the property, and one existing roadway is a driveway to an adjacent property owner’s residence at the highest elevation on site. These wood roads and logging roads are considered cultural landscape features as part of the site’s history.





(iv) concrete foundation – though this structure is noted in the easement, in site visits this resource has not been found on the property.

(v) small rock quarry – though this structure is noted in the easement, in site visits this resource has not been found on the property. There is clearly a former rock quarry on Windy Hill Road on the right before the turn onto Rock Quarry/Dick Phillips Road; but this could be considered part of Appalachian State University property and it is not located within the defined property boundaries.

(vi) Vannoy homeplace – Birth place of Reeves Vannoy, and likely built between 1905 and 1910. This I-House has Victorian gingerbread trim on a two story porch with the rest of the structure quite plain of wood weatherboard. Decorative elements or “gingerbread” could be mass produced in infinite variety, creating opportunities for local saw millers and carpenters in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century into the early 20<sup>th</sup>. The spindles, brackets, columns, railings, balusters, and balustrades on the two tiered porches became focal points for this detail. The Vannoy farmhouse was a bit more simplistic and straightforward in this approach, but this detail is a character defining feature of the building. The gables contain diamond shaped vents and additional diamond shaped wood shingles. The front porch retains newel posts and scroll woodworking details. Weatherboard set diagonally contrasts with the verticality of the two tiered central porch. Two remarkable dry stone-laid chimneys are the building’s distinctive features; though several other buildings regionally have similar chimneys. The range of dates of construction from this property varies from the 1880s to 1910. Comparable regional examples similar to this property include the Jefferson Wilson House near Bethel c.1890 (Appendix J), the Grady McNeil House near Boone c.1900 (Appendix K), and the property is very similar to the John S. Miller House in the Meat Camp vicinity c. 1906. The Miller House was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Johnson and Appendix A) and provides additional regional examples of similar property types. In Alleghany County, multiple similar examples also exist with the closest overall being the Allen Jones House in Prathers Creek (Sizemore, p.70). While there is no existing diagram of interior rooms for this property, a draft is included (Appendix L), which clearly demonstrates the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor plans are nearly identical in room layouts and dimensions. Names for interior rooms in the Vannoy homeplace are 1<sup>st</sup> floor: Entrance Hall/Stairs, Bedroom, Living Room, Kitchen, and Rear Porch. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Right Bedroom, Left Bedroom, Rear Attic, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Attic Space, and Foyer(including Stairway Landing.)

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – From the easement “The Vannoy house appears to date from 1890 to 1900. It is a typical small mountain farmhouse of the period, quite plain, with a small amount of Victorian gingerbread trim on the two-story porch. There has been some vandalism to the structure, though it is essentially intact. The most notable feature of the home place is the two remarkable dry-laid stone chimneys, which are in very good condition. The home place may be possible to renovate, although it is currently in disrepair.”

Since the easement was placed on the property in 2002, this vandalism and current condition of the property has worsened considerably. It seems likely that the building continues to be vandalized and potentially also recently partially lived in. Consulting with local law enforcement regarding frequency of incidents will give some indication as to the current and historic level of crime that has taken place in this structure. The extent of vandalism is severe and many architectural features have been removed from the property or are lying around the structure, the original door was in the ground near the entrance for example in October 2010, but is now gone a month later. The building’s foundation will also need the

services of a structural engineer to determine its current stability. It appears unlikely that the current foundation of wood piers and brick blocks can be maintained for future use of the structure which creates a crawl space that is nearly two feet in height and overly exposed to the elements, animal infestation, and pooling of water underneath the structure. A new foundation will likely be required, one that takes the building to ground level if feasible, but with leaving vents for air flow. A majority of windows on the property are open and animal infestation is also apparent. Unless an immediate future use of this property is determined, my suggestion would be to mothball the structure. The best guide for such a procedure is found in “Mothballing Historic Buildings” (National Park Service – Mothballing) and the opening summary information in this document is also found in (APPENDIX THREE). These actions should be taken after an estimated cost is given on foundation repair. It is possible that costs will be prohibitive to the rehabilitation and future use of this structure. Another strong concern would be whether random human occupancy continues in the property, in which case the chance of fire or other damage increases significantly. From a proposal to First Citizens Bank by Appalachian State University: “Stabilize, secure, and renovate the historic Vannoy farmhouse for use as space for agricultural programs and research that will be conducted on the 189 acre Vannoy farm property. Cost \$85,000.” The overall estimated cost for rehabilitation of this property is likely \$500,000 or more given its current condition and needs.

The two-level porch which is a distinctive feature of the property is also the most vulnerable. The second floor has a strong downward slant to it and it should be considered unsafe for more than a few people to stand here at any one time. Stabilization of this portion of the property may be achieved by adding temporary wooden piers. The decorative wood brackets and additional details should also be considered for removal, so that they can be used again on a future rehabilitation of the property. Original material may continue to be lost with continued vandalism.

The center-passage-plan interior features a stair with square newel post and balusters, plain board and beaded tongue-and-groove wall and ceiling finishes. The rooms have generally low height clearance on both floors. There are original wooden doors and door knobs throughout the interior. The exterior central rear ell of the building also has a dry stone laid chimney, as does the prominent eastern elevation. There is a central brick chimney without flashing through the building; and all chimneys appear in remarkable condition given the damage to other portions of the building. Future use will determine the level of preservation to use on interior spaces and features.

The roof has a rusted look on the exterior likely because it is of galvanized steel. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor porch you can view the roof interior and it shows it to be relatively new, maybe placed on the structure in the past twenty years. Likely there was a metal roof on the property before, placed in the 1940s, which replaced an original wood shingle roof, possibly chestnut shingles. There is access at this location and in other areas of the second floor to this smaller attic area and roof, though in its current condition the weight load may be very low and unsafe.

At this stage it may be premature to mention HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and ADA considerations for this property. All will likely be needed regardless of use and can create a significant fluctuation in project cost. If ultimately demolition is suggested for the building, I would strongly recommend utilizing the process of “deconstruction” engaging students, classes, or expertise from the Technology Department.







(vii) outhouse – likely a c. 1910s building roughly fifty feet north of the rear elevation of the Vannoy home place and entirely covered in vegetation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS – access to this building is limited due to current vegetative growth and no logical pathways to its location. The structure itself is overwhelmingly covered with vegetative growth, but a shed roof and overall wood construction can be determined. A closer inspection of the property would be needed to determine if it remains structurally sound and could be used for storage or similar usage. A stream runs adjacent to this outhouse as it makes it way towards the larger portion of the New River.



(vii.1) new flat roofed barn – From the easement language “In addition there is a relatively new flat roofed barn near Water Tank Road, with nearby a dilapidated small house used for storage and a dilapidated shed.” It is likely misleading to term this structure as “new.” It appears to be wood at least from the 1950s; it is perhaps the combination of newer wood and metal fencing and pens around it that gives this impression. The roof is also more accurately classified as a shed roof.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS** - Since this area was in active agricultural and livestock grazing use with perimeter fencing, it was not possible to view the structure closely in detail. However, it appears to be an open barn/shed structure used for the storage of hay and additional animal feed. It is constructed of wood weatherboard with a wooden roof and wood eaves. It appears structurally sound and could continue to be used for its current function for feed storage by Appalachian State University.





(vii.2) small storage house - From the easement language “In addition there is a relatively new flat roofed barn near Water Tank Road, with nearby a dilapidated small house used for storage and a dilapidated shed.” Possibly constructed in the 1920s, it is difficult to determine this accurately without closer inspection.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS** - Since this area was in active agricultural and livestock grazing use with perimeter fencing it was not possible to view the structure closely in detail. It appears to be originally constructed of weatherboard with a current faux brick exterior, maybe concrete block construction, or a peel on asphalt strip treatment. There is a metal roof with portions blown off and one brick chimney. It appears that with a shoring up of the roof that this building could continue to serve for adequate storage, it is not recommended to be used as a residence.



(vii.3) dilapidated shed - From the easement language “In addition there is a relatively new flat roofed barn near Water Tank Road, with nearby a dilapidated small house used for storage and a dilapidated shed.” The building is likely c.1910s or 1920s construction. During an Appalachian State University open house in September 2010, a neighbor indicated that this building used to be a small store that sat on what was then the meandering Water Tank Road. When the road was straightened out the building was in a field with no apparent use except to shelter cows. It seems certain that this was the building referred to, and it should be noted cows continue to occupy this area and utilize this shed for shelter.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS & PRESERVATION RECCOMENDATIONS** - Since this area was in active agricultural and livestock grazing use with perimeter fencing it was not possible to view the structure closely in detail. However, it is a weatherboard constructed open bay shed building with a shed roof of metal attached to wood. Pieces of the roof appear to have blown off but it appears structurally sound, and could continue to be utilized for livestock and feed storage purposes.





## **Winebarger Purchase & Neighbors**

The Winebarger land purchase is approximately 24.4 acres, and does not contain any standing structures. A roadway entrance from Water Tank Road is planned, to be gravel and not asphalt paving. The Vannoy-Blackburn farm is approximately 369 acres total. The Home Place / Blackburn Tract is parcel 15231-011; the Phillips Road / Vannoy Tract is 15231-071 and 15271-022; the Winebarger purchase is 15231-098, 15231-100 and 15231-101 (Appendix M). Other numbers associated with the Home Place Tract include N.C.G.S. #121-34 et. seq. – G.S. 160A-266 to 279. An Excel document entitled “Copy of Vannoy Neighbors 2” lists the addresses, parcel numbers, and acreage of the 62 separate property owners adjacent or near the Vannoy-Blackburn farm property (Appalachian State University, Taylor). Ranges in acreage owned are from under 1 acre to over 90 acres, by combining land owners with exact last names or perceived familial relationships this total of any one land-owning family becomes at most 180 acres. With the Vannoy-Blackburn farm purchase at 369 total acres, Appalachian State University is now the largest land owner in this area of Ashe County.

## **Sustainable Development Program & Adaptive Reuse**

The Sustainable Development Program has about 200 students. It emphasizes environment, economic and social equity in sustainable agriculture and land use. The 18-year-old program seeks to fulfill a United Nation’s definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Reuse of existing buildings on site follows this definition, and “the greenest building is the one already built.” Historic preservation is inherently sustainable through the reuse of buildings, components, and materials, and through the wise utilization of resources. The advisory committee for the Blackburn-Vannoy properties, headed by Christof den Biggelaar, continues to meet with the goal of determining potential reuse possibilities for each site. The committee is strictly following the easement guidelines with regard to the permitted uses of the Blackburn-Vannoy properties. They will be the entity to review and approve any proposals; however, given that the primary function of the Blackburn tract will be as the site of the Sustainable Development Teaching & Research Farm (a working farm with crop, fruit tree, livestock and forest components), Sustainable Development is expected to manage this property. The easements clearly state language for preservation of the historic farmhouses and “additional properties of historic significance.” **For rehabilitation, deconstruction, or any major preservation treatments on these properties consultation with the Blue Ridge Conservancy as the easement holder is essential.** There may indeed be flexibility in easement interpretation; and a more active use of the sites such as for family reunions, corporate retreats, artists in residences, or uses that bring in slight revenue might be considered. Multiple examples exist of similar sites used in this manner; however it is unlikely any adaptive reuse of structures on this site will bring in enough funding to cover total maintenance and operation costs.

The Blackburn farmhouse would be the best location of a local history exhibit, from the buildings on site. Demonstrating sustainable agricultural methods also presents an opportunity for living history that could generate public interest. Exhibits could also contain a sustainable development theme, highlighting agricultural tools and techniques used previously on this farm, when sustainability was a requirement and not simply a luxury. Exhibits and living history interpretation could also speak on the transition from a subsistence market to the boom of agriculture and timber in the 1880s and 1890s regionally, and the impact this had on the land and landscapes. The conversion of the farmhouse into exhibits also could be a

teaching tool on the “greening” of existing buildings and historic structures. Indicating why the historic wood windows have equal efficiency to newer products, how insulation in the attic and crawl space creates a more efficient thermal envelope, and how relatively minor exterior repairs improve the building envelope and its energy efficiency. A chart similar to the following is one example of historic “greening” specifics (National Trust).

In addition to an upgrade of the exterior envelope, new mechanical equipment should be high-efficiency and properly placed to allow improved control within individual spaces. All lighting should be as energy-efficient as possible. During rehabilitation, the recycling and reuse of materials should be favored, a design for minimal energy usage, utilization of day lighting, and introduction of new natural materials and finishes with no volatile organic compounds. This course of action fits into the long view thinking of sustainable development, and can also fit the needs of adaptively reusing this residential property.

Regardless of future intended uses it is important to note that outbuildings, and especially barns, are an important building component to utilize on site or at least under utilize and remain standing on the landscape. “Historic barns are preserved for a number of reasons. Some are so well built that they remain useful even after a hundred years or more. Many others are intimately connected with the families who built them and the surrounding communities. Others reflect developments in agricultural science or regional building types.” (National Park Service – Barns)

There are a few examples of outbuildings and barns connected for creative residential housing, this example perhaps being the most notable in North Carolina (Dixon, D.). Such a conversion, radical or otherwise, is not warranted given the location and feel of this unique site. Housing needs should be contained only to the ranch house on the Home Place / Blackburn Tract if at all possible.

### **Possible Funding Sources**

Appalachian State University has existing resources to research and determine appropriate funding sources for the rehabilitation of historic properties on the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm. Dr. Pollyanne S. Frantz, Director of Proposal Development, and the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs are one avenue, and there may be others. The following potential funding notes came about in doing research on the history of this property, and are not meant to be an extensive list of potential donors.

The Covington Foundation supports historic preservation activities in North Carolina, including actual funding for rehabilitation efforts. They also have a specific interest in preservation education and could be contacted on whether the rehabilitation of this site is within their interests for funding. A National Trust for Historic Preservation PF grant could be utilized to partially cover the services of an engineer or architect in creating a stabilization or design report. The Cemala Foundation is specific to Guilford County, but has given considerably to historic preservation efforts for education. There might be similar entities that include Ashe County in their geographical area of funding. The U.S Department of Agriculture grants are vast, specific to historic buildings is the historic barn program which funded in 2002, is now subject to Congressional approval. The Farm and Ranch Land Protection program under the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service is primarily for actual purchase and preservation of land, but has included grants for rehabilitation funding for structures on these lands in the past. Each state handles its Transportation Enhancements program differently, but every state includes historic preservation as a fundable category. If the future expansion of Highway 221 is within the boundaries of



impact and the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm property is considered an “affected property,” there may be possibility for rehabilitation funding through the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Unique or specific transportation history related to this site would need to be researched and highlighted for this potential. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is essential for any government grants.

### **Other Possible Partnerships**

The Ashe County Parks and Recreation department, Ashe County Arts Council, or Agricultural Extension Office are other potential sources of information or interest on this site. A past newsletter of the Ashe County Historical Society, May 2004, indicated a Bobby Absher seeking interested persons in creating an agricultural heritage museum in Ashe County (Ashe County Historical Society). Bobby Absher currently is involved in several committees of the agricultural extension office in Ashe County. Dr. Cecelia Conway, English, also lists the “Ashe County Agricultural Museum” under a list of partnerships in the Faculty & Staff Experts Directory of Appalachian State University. Margi Lee, Technology, tried to save a threatened historic property, the Mary Brown House, in Ashe County recently and may have further insights to possible partners or interested parties locally.

The Fleetwood Preservation Organization Committee has a mailing address at PO Box 121, Fleetwood, NC 28626 and at last count, indicated in the Excel document “Copy of Vannoy neighbors 2”(Appalachian State University, Taylor), twenty members on this committee, of which most share a common last name or address with another member. There is no evidence that this organization has official non-profit status, but it does appear to be active and meets in the former school in Fleetwood according to a recent newspaper article (Campbell).

### **Probable Costs**

\$300,000 is given for the Blackburn residence as a rough estimate to bring the facility to code and a bare minimum reuse for public programming. Final usage determines additional costs and should be done by architects, engineers, etc. Costs for each structure could be broken down roughly into structural, architectural, and Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing. A cost of \$500,000 is given for the Vannoy residence, but a future use, if any, would determine this further. Both of these numbers are likely very low, and assume a certain amount of volunteer, labor, services, and materials. There is an immediate need for an operations and maintenance budget for structures on these sites. This should be roughly \$20,000 annually and preferably increased once uses for properties are determined. If no immediate stabilization or moth-balling efforts take place on properties throughout these sites, the costs for rehabilitation go up significantly as conditions will worsen rapidly.

### **Relation of Property to Boone, North Carolina**

Drive time is roughly 25 minutes from the Appalachian State University campus with the basic directions of “East on Highway 421 to Highway 221. Left on Highway 221 about 4.5 miles, Right on Old Water Tank Road.” The overall relation of the 157 acres of the Home Place / Blackburn Tract and the 189 acres of the Dick Phillips Road / Vannoy Tract to Boone and in the regional area is found in this location map. (Appendix N)

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Houck, John, Clarice Weaver, and Carol Williams. *Ashe County*. Images of America. Charleston, S.C: Arcadia, 2000. Print. (Images in this publication listed below, not included in this report)

p. 39 photo caption "Sarah Fine and Will Vannoy. The Vannoys lived in Tuckerdale in 1875.

p. 73 photo caption "Dr. Pepper Plant in West Jefferson (c.1940s). Carl F. Colvard and H.R. Vannoy are admiring their new Grapette truck.



Houck, John, Clarice Weaver, and Carol Williams. *Ashe County Revisited*. Images of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2002. Print. (Images in this publication listed below, not included in this report)

p. 76 photo caption “Wade E. Vannoy in His Lumberyard. These stacks of lumber were used in Mr. Vannoy’s successful flooring plant in West Jefferson, which was started in 1935.

p. 79 photo caption “The Parade Moves Out. Blackburn’s Department Store’s float proceeds up Main Street in this c. 1940 Christmas parade.

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186. 8/11/1800 John Blackburn – 50 acres

187. 8/11/1800 Benjamin Blackburn – 50 acres

1110. 8/6/1804 Edmund Blackburn – 150 acres

1111. 8/6/1804 Edmund Blackburn – 100 acres

1174. 2/11/1805 Edmund Blackburn – 200 acres

1524. 2/11/1806 John Blackburn – 100 acres

1527. 2/11/1806 John Blackburn – 100 acres

1528. 2/11/1806 Edmund Blackburne – 50 acres

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MAP: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/symposia/newriver-84/images/fig9.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/symposia/newriver-84/images/fig9.pdf)

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## **Appendix List:**

**APPENDIX ONE** – Family History & Historical Overview; **APPENDIX TWO** – The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation; **APPENDIX THREE** – Moth-balling of Historic Structures

**A – John S. Miller House image and partial text** - Pezzoni, J D, and Tony N. Van Winkle. *The Architectural History of Watauga County, North Carolina*. Durham, NC: BW&A Books, 2009. p.170.

**B - Wilkes County Early Land Titles** - Wilkes County, Petitions Concerning Land, North Carolina Archives, Shelf No. 104.408.2, Loose Papers. From Proceedings of the “New River Symposium 1984,” presentation by William D. Bennett, Raleigh, NC. Website.

[http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/symposia/newriver-84/sec3.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/symposia/newriver-84/sec3.htm)

MAP: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/symposia/newriver-84/images/fig9.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/symposia/newriver-84/images/fig9.pdf)

**C – Hand-Drawn maps and code** – Margrif, Trent. October 2010. 3 pages of hand drawn maps of the Blackburn and Vannoy properties now owned by Appalachian State University, and code.

**D – 4 pages** of aerial, topographic, and GIS maps of Blackburn property; from Ashe County Tax Mapping & NC Floodplain Mapping Program, and GIS. (Website sources noted on documents)

**E – Tillman Adams House image and text** - Pezzoni, J D, and Tony N. Van Winkle. *The Architectural History of Watauga County, North Carolina*. Durham, NC: BW&A Books, 2009. p.101.

**F – Newton Banner House image and text** – Ibid. p. 106.

**G – Farmhouse Floor Plan** - Carter, Timothy D. *Complete Appraisal Summary Report of Beulah Vannoy Property, 720 and 608 Catherine Court, Fleetwood, NC 28626* for First Citizens Bank by AA&G Appraisal Service, Inc. 2002. (Found in the files of the Blue Ridge Conservancy)

**H – Main Residence Floor Plan** – Ibid.

**I – 5 pages** of aerial, topographic, and GIS maps of Vannoy property; from Ashe County Tax Mapping & NC Floodplain Mapping Program, and GIS. (Website sources noted on documents)

**J – Jefferson Wilson House image and text** - Pezzoni, J D, and Tony N. Van Winkle. *The Architectural History of Watauga County, North Carolina*. Durham, NC: BW&A Books, 2009. p.213.

**K – Grady McNeil House image and text** - Ibid. p. 169.

**L - Hand-Drawn Floor Plan for Vannoy Homeplace** – Margrif, Trent. November 2010. 2 pages of hand-drawn floor plans with room measurements.

**M - 3 pages** of aerial, topographic, and GIS maps of Vannoy property; from Ashe County Tax Mapping & NC Floodplain Mapping Program, and GIS. (Website sources noted on documents)

**N - 1 page** of relation of properties to Boone, from Ashe County Tax Mapping & USGS. Website.

**O – North Carolina Special Warranty Deed** – Appalachian State University (files of Dayton Cole); can also be access at Ashe County Register of Deeds. Website. <http://www.ashencrod.org/Opening.asp>

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Family History & Historical Overview**

This Ashe County farm is 369 acres from the estate of the late Beulah and Reeves Vannoy. The farm is in two tracts, both near Fleetwood, North Carolina. Proceedings of the New River Symposium held in 1984 and a presentation by William D. Bennett on “Early Settlement Along the New River (NC and VA basin) indicates both Blackburn and Vannoy families obtained original land grants in 1793 in what was then a portion of Wilkes County, North Carolina. Ashe County was established in 1799 from Wilkes County. An early map further shows purchases listed under Nathaniel Vannoy and three under Francis Vannoy. These purchases appear to be the general location of what is currently identified as both the Home Place Tract and Phillips Road Tract. The present location of the majority of the Vannoy-Blackburn Farm would appear to be on the same locations of 182 and 183 on this map, under the name Francis Vannoy (Appendix B). Blackburn and Vannoy family names are common in the region, and any relation to relatives of the Vannoy-Blackburn sites now owned by Appalachian State University is not certain.

“Abstracts of Land Entries: Ashe County” also provides eight entries under “Blackburn(e)” from 1800 to 1806 in Ashe County, though it is difficult to place the specific parcels of land described. In “The Heritage of Ashe County” the last names of Vannoy and Blackburn(e) appear roughly thirty times each in the index, and various family lineages and summaries are given. Some images of family photos are also included but the buildings in the background are not of the Vannoy-Blackburn farm. “Ashe County: a History” also has multiple citations of Vannoy or Blackburn in its index. Finally, the 1810 census notes a Gregory Blackburn E. (Edmond) family of 2 males to age 10, 1 male between 26-45, 1 female 10-16, and 1 female 26-45. The head of the Ashe County Chamber of Commerce stated “Richard Blackburn said that he felt that Dr. Pat Mitchell would be the person most knowledgeable about the legal details regarding those farms.” She is the Economic Development Director for Ashe County.

### **Further Research**

Attached is the most recent recordation of deeds for Appalachian State University’s ownership of this site, Book 411, Page 1823, 7 pages on 9/7/2010. (Appendix O) This document notes three additional previous deeds; Book 383, Page 461, 4 pages on 5/28/08; Book 375, Page 98, 4 pages on 11/19/2007; Book 409, Page 176, 5 pages on 6/3/2010. The conservation easement was recorded on 2/28/2002, Book 274, Page 197. From these additional deeds noted, the Home Place / Blackburn Tract can be traced to a one page deed recorded on 3/28/1961. A book 1 and E231 is also noted, but this document was not viewable through Ashe County Government online. Regarding the Phillips Road / Vannoy Tract, the conservation easement was recorded on 2/15/2002, Book 274, Page 228. The three tracts that make up the Phillips Road Tract are also noted in Book 377, Page 178, 4 pages recorded on 1/18/2008. Both of these documents note four previous deeds. Book C-5, Page 209, 1 page on 12/11/1972; Book P-3, Page 354, 1 page on 11/16/1951; Book N-3, Page 524, 1 page on 9/8/1941; Book C-4, Page 473, 1 page on 7/25/1935. Neither of these documents further indicated previously recorded deeds. It should also be noted that the only deeds which include any sort of description of existing resources are the conservation easements. As part of Ashe County Estate File No. 01 E231, no new information is gained specific to the buildings on the site as this is primarily the recorded last will and testament of Beulah Blackburn Vannoy. It does note the \$40,000 reserved for the Vannoy cemetery trust, legal papers from Margaret and Norman Church seeking payment from the estate filed by Vannoy & Reeves, PLLC, and notes of the following additional

documents. This document sites an appraisal of the brick house and white farm house (Blackburn) dated 6/12/01 performed by Nathan W. Sapp. It also notes a real estate maintenance expense given to a Seabury & Smith, and another appraisal done on 5/7/02 by AA & G Appraisal services. Finally, it records a statement of assets on 9/30/02 of 157 acres at 720 Catherine Court with easement at a \$650,000 cost basis, and \$324,000 market value.

The Edmund Spencer Blackburn papers, 1903-1912, in the University Archives contains written material and photographs, and may be related to the Vannoy-Blackburn family and this site. The Robert C. Proffit papers, 1938-1989, include genealogy and research on a Blackburn family. It is assumed the Board of Trustees retreat on December 4, 2008, that comes up in the library catalog was simply a regularly scheduled meeting taking place here, and no additional specific information to the site would be found in these files considered CLOSED that has not already been collected. Greta Browning, Reference Librarian, has been helpful in these searches and determining content of these files.

It should be noted that the use of the agricultural out buildings is an educated guess on my part; many indeed could have been used for smokehouses, root cellars, and other purposes throughout their history. There are likely regional experts who could more definitively determine historic uses of agricultural outbuildings. Employees and volunteers at the Museum of Appalachia and other “building zoos” in the region also may have extensive experience and knowledge on these structures. I am unaware of any past oral histories collected from the Blackburn or Vannoy families, or recent caretakers, which could further provide detailed information on the buildings on site.



## APPENDIX TWO

### The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

<http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm>

## APPENDIX THREE – Moth-balling of Historic Structures

**When all means of finding a productive use** for a historic building have been exhausted or when funds are not currently available to put a deteriorating structure into a useable condition, it may be necessary to close up the building temporarily to protect it from the weather as well as to secure it from vandalism. This process, known as mothballing, can be a necessary and effective means of protecting the building while planning the property's future, or raising money for a preservation, rehabilitation or restoration project. If a vacant property has been declared unsafe by building officials, stabilization and mothballing may be the only way to protect it from demolition.

This Preservation Brief focuses on the steps needed to "de-activate" a property for an extended period of time. The project team will usually consist of an architect, historian, preservation specialist, sometimes a structural engineer, and a contractor. Mothballing should not be done without careful planning to ensure that needed physical repairs are made prior to securing the building. The steps discussed in this Brief can protect buildings for periods of up to ten years; long-term success will also depend on continued, although somewhat limited, monitoring and maintenance. For all but the simplest projects, hiring a team of preservation specialists is recommended to assess the specific needs of the structure and to develop an effective mothballing program.

A vacant historic building cannot survive indefinitely in a boarded-up condition, and so even marginal interim uses where there is regular activity and monitoring, such as a caretaker residence or non-flammable storage, are generally preferable to mothballing. In a few limited cases when the vacant building is in good condition and in a location where it can be watched and checked regularly, closing and locking the door, setting heat levels at just above freezing, and securing the windows may provide sufficient protection for a period of a few years.

But if long-term mothballing is the only remaining option, it must be done properly. This will require stabilization of the exterior, properly designed security protection, generally some form of interior ventilation--either through mechanical or natural air exchange systems--and continued maintenance and surveillance monitoring.

Comprehensive mothballing programs are generally expensive and may cost 10% or more of a modest rehabilitation budget. However, the money spent on well-planned protective measures will seem small when amortized over the life of the resource. Regardless of the location and condition of the property or the funding available, the following 9 steps are involved in properly mothballing a building:

- Documentation**
1. Document the architectural and historical significance of the building.
  2. Prepare a condition assessment of the building.
- Stabilization**
3. Structurally stabilize the building, based on a professional condition assessment.
  4. Exterminate or control pests, including termites and rodents.
  5. Protect the exterior from moisture penetration.
- Mothballing**
6. Secure the building and its component features to reduce vandalism or break-ins.
  7. Provide adequate ventilation to the interior.
  8. Secure or modify utilities and mechanical systems.
  9. Develop and implement maintenance and monitoring plan for protection.