

How You Can Help:

➤ Don't move the rocks! Avoid disturbing natural areas and protected lands by following Leave No Trace principles.

➤ If you see a small rock sculpture, dismantle it gently and disperse the rocks to discourage rebuilding.



River Ranger Roean deconstructs a dam at Looking Glass Falls in Pisgah National Forest

➤ If you see something, say something. Report large stacks and dams to the Pisgah Ranger Station at [828-877-3265](tel:828-877-3265).

➤ Tell your friends and family. Help us advocate for a healthy and biologically diverse river!

Pisgah River Rangers is an outreach and education program designed to promote and protect the ecological health of Pisgah's natural resources with a focus on watershed health.

Thank you to our 2025 program partners!



Follow along with the Pisgah River Rangers on social media



Pisgah River Rangers



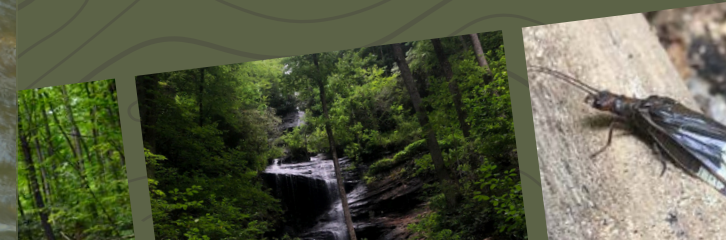
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Pisgah River Rangers

DON'T MOVE THE ROCKS!

Moving rocks destroys the homes of many important fish, insects, and amphibians!



Species You May Find In Our Streams

- Brook Trout
- Aquatic Salamanders
- Dragonfly Nymph
- Caddisfly Nymph
- Mayfly Nymph
- Darters and Dace
- Mottled Sculpin
- Freshwater Mussels
- Mountain Brook Lamprey



Rock stacking, cairn building, and building rock dams may appear to be a harmless activity, but wildlife could be hiding between the rocks!



Eastern Hellbender: Photo by
Lori Williams, NCWRC

What is a “Cairn”?

In Gaelic, the word means “heap of stones” built as a memorial or landmark. Official cairns can act as trail markers, but they do not belong in the river.



Harms Wildlife & Habitat

Stacking, damming, and channelizing rocks in a river displaces and degrades habitat, can harm or kill wildlife, alters stream flows, and increases sediment pollution, impacting the quality of the water.

Many species make their homes and nests on, underneath, or in the crevices of rocks. Moving these rocks can cause eggs, young fish, salamanders, and aquatic insects to die.



Increased sediment or silt in water can fill crevices between rocks that animals use for habitat. Sedimentation of streams can reduce aquatic animal’s ability to breathe or absorb oxygen.



Where’s the food?

Many ecologically and culturally important species such as trout feed on aquatic macroinvertebrates (or baby bugs!) that live underneath river rocks. Moving these rocks can reduce the food available for fish.



River rocks will often grow a layer of algae that acts as a food source for fish and macroinvertebrates. When these algae covered rocks are removed from the water, the algae can dry and die, removing it as a food source for the aquatic animals that depend on it.