

April 2, 2007

Dear Abbie Hanchey,

I have enclosed a copy of the story my student, Ashley Broome, wrote about Leatherwood Mountains. Her description of the place influenced my husband and I to visit there while he was on military leave from Kuwait. It was just as beautiful as she described it and we had a **WONDERFUL** time! I hope that you are able to include her story in your newsletter. She wrote this about "her favorite place" for a countywide Reflections competition. She also received 2<sup>nd</sup> place in our school in this contest. Children love to see their hard work pay off and be published in some way. I hope that if it is included you would send me three copies, one for Ashley, our school, and one for myself. Thank you again for asking for this story. Ashley was delighted to hear you had written to us.

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## My Favorite Place



My favorite place is in the mountains of North Carolina. It is a beautiful place called Leatherwood. As you drive along the sharp curvy roads there is a creek on one side of the road. The land around here is full of pastures and mountains. You see a lot of horses and cows as you drive down the road. When you enter Leatherwood there are several pastures that each have horses in them. They are so beautiful running and with the mountains in the background it makes quite a first impression. As you go through the gate you then come to the Welcome Center. This is a very old log cabin; it is over one hundred years old. It is quaint and beautiful, like everything here. You are surrounded by tranquility and the beauty of nature. To find out other great things about this favorite place, keep reading.

The thing I like most of course is the horses. You can go on trail rides with the horses. They have one or two hour trail rides up the mountain. It is scary and fun all at the same time. They have over one hundred trails. If you own your horse you can bring it and keep it there with you. We always rent a horse to ride. Seeing the scenery on a horse is incredible. We go through a little stream of water and that is a little scary. We also get to ride the horse on the road for a small way. It is so exciting and so much fun.

They have horse shows there and a huge horse challenge up the mountain. They have cook-outs and bands. It is a real family environment and that is part of what makes it so great. They have about ninety houses there that you can rent. Almost all of them have hot tubs, and I know why!! After riding a horse you are sore and need to soak in one of the hot tubs. It feels really good. We have been in the hot tub with it snowing all around us! That was amazing. Last year when we were there, we had a lot of wind, like 60mph

and the power went out. That was so much fun, we had to keep the fire going all night to stay warm and it was like we were camping. It was a fun kind of scary time.

The views are amazing! They take your breath away sometimes and they change very quickly. We have watched storms come in and seen it rain on one part of the mountain and not the other. We would love to be there for a big snow but that hasn't happened yet. There are many things to do or very little. Some people like to go and just read books and relax. My family likes to go for the views and the peacefulness. We play games while we are there and take hikes and check out nature. We have seen many deer, wild turkeys, hawks, and snakes, lots of birds, a flying squirrel and many others.

When you go to this great place you never know what it will bring and that is part of the wonder of being there. It is a wonderful place to spend time with your family, rest and be a part of nature. It is a special place that leaves you with something when you go home, a special place in your heart called Leatherwood.

I hope you have enjoyed the journey to my favorite place and I hope one day you can experience Leatherwood Mountains.