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National Geographic Picks Inn for First-Ever Appalachia Map

BALSAM, N.C. – The historic Balsam Mountain Inn is one of an elite group of sites and events included in the first-ever National Geographic Map Guide to Appalachia. The map appeared in the April issue of National Geographic’s *Traveler* magazine and is a joint venture between National Geographic and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

More than 1,000 destinations and events were nominated to showcase the region’s natural, cultural and heritage assets. After extensive review, that list was pared to 356 sites for inclusion in the map guide.

“To be selected among the best of the best in Appalachia speaks to the historical and cultural significance of the Balsam Inn,” said Sharon White, who co-owns the inn with husband Kim Shailer. “We feel this is one of the South’s quintessential mountain inns, and we’re thrilled National Geographic and the Appalachian Regional Commission agree.”

The three-story Balsam Mountain Inn has been a mountain treasure since opening in 1908 to serve railroad passengers coming to the Balsam Depot, then the highest railway depot east of the Rockies at 3,500 feet above sea level.

The inn was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and completely restored in 1990-91. It now features 50 guest rooms and suites, a 100-seat restaurant, a 2,000-volume library, two meeting rooms, sitting parlor, hiking trails, gift shop, and two 100-foot porches for rocking and relaxing. An entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway is less than a mile away.

In addition to appearing in the April issue of *Traveler*, 300,000 copies of the National Geographic Map Guide to Appalachia will be distributed to travelers by tourism divisions in the Appalachian Regional Commission’s 13 states. The map guide is also available on the web at: www.nationalgeographic.com/appalachia.

Balsam Mountain Inn is located just off U.S. Hwy. 23/74 between Waynesville and Sylva, about 35 minutes west of Asheville. For info or reservations, call the inn at (800) 224-9498 or visit www.BalsamMountainInn.com.# # #