

History records in Buncombe County ( [www.dupontforest.com](http://www.dupontforest.com) ) document a land-grant of 11,000 acres to a Thomas family for contribution in the revolutionary war around 1790s. In 1956 DuPont Company purchased 11,000 acres and started manufacturing polyester and X-ray films in 1960. At the peak of business cycle a thousand people worked at that site. Waterfalls, lakes, campsites and picnic areas were limited to use by employee and retiree families and their guests. Boy scouts, church groups and community members invited and escorted by the employee families were always welcome.

DuPont sold the declining film business in 1996 , sold 7600 acres to the State for \$2.2 Million and the remaining land featuring waterfalls, lakes and the manufacturing plant to a finance company who called the business Sterling Diagnostic Imaging. Within a couple of years Sterling sold the film business to Agfa without the remaining forest area featuring waterfalls and lakes. Soon Agfa shut down the business and the physical plant was flattened to the ground. The scenic area was purchased by a real estate developer who outbid the state and installed miles of roads for apparent private gated upscale residential community. Due to popular public demand the state invoked the Eminent Domain law to prevent residential development and reportedly paid the developer 4X his investment as settlement. I showed the hikers a 1977 photograph of a DuPont employee child wading in the stream upstream of High Falls and walking on a trail parallel to Little River. Currently there is the iconic covered bridge and the Buck Forest Road built to support the real estate development (Photos attached).

While former employees ( like me) miss the old days, we realize lot more people enjoy the forest now; hikers, walkers, swimmers, fishermen, bikers, horses, and the nationally sanctioned DuPont marathon . This would not have been possible if the land was under the ownership of a corporation or an upscale residential community. –Ashok Kudva