

### INTRODUCTION

The Marion West 7.5-minute quadrangle lies in McDowell County, western North Carolina. Within the quadrangle are the city of Marion and the smaller communities of Providence, Pleasant Gardens, and Garden Creek. Interstate 40, U.S. Routes 70 and 221, and N.C. Highways 226 and 80 are the major transportation corridors on the quadrangle. Major water features include Lake Tahoma, Catawba River, and Buck Creek. Total elevation relief is 1,924 feet with a low of 1,195 feet along the Catawba River and a high of 3,119 feet at Greenlee Mountain. A significant portion of the quadrangle is located along the Blue Ridge escarpment, the steep transition zone between the mountain and piedmont physiographic provinces.

### GEOLOGIC OVERVIEW

Bedrock of the Marion West quadrangle is composed of units within five thrust sheets (from structurally highest to lowest): Fries/Spruce Pine, eastern Tugalo, Fork Ridge, Table Rock, and Wilson Creek. The Table Rock and Wilson Creek thrust sheets comprise the Grandfather Mountain window, a tectonic window overlain by the Blue Ridge-Piedmont Megathrust that contains the upper thrust sheets exposed on the quadrangle (Fries/Spruce Pine, eastern Tugalo, and Fork Ridge). Brief descriptions of the units within these thrust sheets are given below, beginning in the northwest corner of the map and proceeding to the southeast.

### FRIES/SRUCE PINE THRUST SHEET

The Fries/Spruce Pine thrust sheet is part of the western Tugalo terrane. This thrust sheet contains Neoproterozoic mafic and mafic rocks of the Ashe and Alligator Back Metamorphic Suites. These rocks are thick sequences of complexly deformed and metamorphosed clastic sediments deposited in marine rift basins. Interspersed with these sediments are lesser amounts of mafic volcanic rocks and ultramafic rocks thought to have originated as oceanic crust at a spreading center (Mira and Conte, 1991; Raymond and Abbott, 1997). These metamorphosed lithologies were completely remobilized and metamorphosed to amphibolite facies conditions during Taconic orogenesis. Rocks of the Spruce Pine thrust sheet are structurally above the Fork Ridge thrust sheet. Field data from the Marion West quadrangle indicate that this contact is overturned toward the northwest in this area.

### FORK RIDGE THRUST SHEET

On the Marion West quadrangle the Fork Ridge thrust sheet is comprised of the Cranberry gneiss and, tentatively, the porphyroclastic biotite gneiss unit. Extensive mylonitization obscures contact relationships but the porphyroclastic biotite gneiss unit is interpreted to intrude the Ashe Metamorphic Suite on the adjoining Old Fort quadrangle and, possibly, Mesoproterozoic basement gneisses on the Marion West quadrangle. A preliminary age date of 360 Ma for the porphyroclastic biotite gneiss (R. McAleer, March 2020, personal communication) is intriguing as Paleozoic intrusions into the Mesoproterozoic basement have not previously been reported for this area.

### CRANBERRY GNEISS UNDIVIDED UNIT

The Cranberry gneiss undivided unit on the Marion West quadrangle is primarily a granitic orthogneiss with lesser amounts of biotite granitic gneiss and amphibolite. It is exposed NW of the Livville Falls fault and is interpreted to be Mesoproterozoic in age (Bryant and Reed, 1970). Lesser amounts of chlorite and muscovite within the unit differentiate it from the Toms Creek granitic orthogneiss on the quadrangle. The Fork Ridge thrust sheet and the underlying Grandfather Mountain Window are separated by the Livville Falls fault, an Alleghenian greenschist-facies ductile thrust fault (Van Camp and Fullagar, 1982).

### GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN WINDOW

The Grandfather Mountain Window is a tectonic window of Paleozoic rocks. These gneisses are overlain by the Table Rock thrust sheet. The Grandfather Mountain Window is framed by the Livville Falls fault.

### TABEROCK THRUST SHEET

Cambrian-aged quartzites of the Chilhowee Group represent a rift-to-drift transition during the opening of the Iapetus Ocean basin (Hatcher and others, 2007). On the Marion West quadrangle the quartzite occurs as several small mylonitic slices along the Livville Falls fault and one large body in contact with the Toms Creek granitic orthogneiss along the Taberock thrust fault (Bryant and Reed, 1970; Conley and Drummond, 1981).

### WILSON CREEK BASEMENT THRUST SHEET

This is an informally named thrust sheet that constitutes the lowest structural area on the quadrangle. The Toms Creek granitic gneiss unit is of unknown age and is informally named after an undeformed core of granitic orthogneiss in the Johnson Paving Co. Inc. quarry along Toms Creek. Most of the unit is strongly mylonitic, only recognizable by pink potassium-feldspar layers and plentiful chlorite and muscovite. The Toms Creek gneiss is a subunit within the Mesoproterozoic Wilson Creek gneiss mapped by Bryant and Reed (1970).

### BREWARD ZONE

The Livville Falls fault framing the Grandfather Mountain Window is cut by the Brevard Zone, a prominent NE-SW-striking feature. The Brevard Zone is a linear fault zone that extends from Alabama to Virginia. It has a complex history of multiple reactivations with the earliest movement during the Neoproterozoic. This first movement was ductile and high-temperature with an oblique to strike-slip motion. During the Alleghenian orogeny, the Brevard fault reactivated with ductile strike-slip motion reaching greenschist-facies conditions, and later, experienced brittle dip-slip motion (Hatcher and others, 2007). On the Marion West quadrangle the mylonite/phyllonite unit of the Brevard Zone is comprised of rocks that have been extremely mylonitized. The mylonitization makes protolith recognition very difficult and the mylonite/phyllonite zone likely contains panels of both Toms Creek gneiss and Tallulah Falls metasediments.

### EASTERN TUGALO TERRANE

The Tallulah Falls Formation, the Tallulah Falls Formation consists of meta-sedimentary and meta-igneous rocks interpreted to have been deposited in a distal marine basin outward of the Laurentian rift margin (Hatcher and others, 2007). TFF rocks on the quadrangle have been metamorphosed to upper amphibolite facies and are migmatitic.

### MYLONITE AND MYLONITIC FOLIATIONS

Mylonite and mylonitic foliations within the quadrangle dominantly strike NE-SW and dip moderately to the SE. The prominent fracture set strikes NW-SE and is steeply dipping. A minor fracture set strikes NE-SW and is moderately to steeply dipping.

### DESCRIPTION OF MAP UNITS<sup>1</sup>

**bzmp** Mylonite/phyllonite — Intensely deformed rocks with unknown protoliths. Tan to light-gray to dark-gray to light-olive-gray, fine- to coarse-grained; lepidoblastic to porphyroblastic; strongly foliated; mylonitic, locally ultramylonitic, locally brecciated; consists of sericite, quartz, feldspar, biotite, chlorite, and accessory graphite, garnet, sulfides, magnetite, and opaque minerals. Lenticular muscovite-aggregate porphyroblasts flattened in the mylonitic foliation planes impart a distinctive "fish scale" or "button" appearance to phyllosilicates. Locally interlayered with porphyroclastic biotite gneiss, granitic orthogneiss, and felsic gneiss.

### Metasedimentary Rocks

**Cze** Quartzite — White, fine- to medium-grained; thin- to thick-bedded; consists of about >85% quartz, 10% muscovite-sericite, 1-3% plagioclase, and traces of apatite, zircon, epidote group minerals, and titanite.

### Tallulah Falls Formation (TFF)

**Undivided** — Heterogeneous unit consisting of biotite gneiss interlayered with lesser amounts of metagraywacke, schistose metagraywacke, mica schist, metasediment, amphibolite, felsic gneiss, and altered ultramafic bodies. Biotite gneiss is typically gray to grayish-black; medium- to coarse-grained; well foliated; compositionally layered; locally protomylonitic; inequigranular; locally porphyroblastic to lepidoblastic; migmatitic; consists of plagioclase, quartz, biotite, potassium feldspar, muscovite, garnet, epidote group minerals, chlorite, and opaque minerals. Commonly interlayered with other TFF lithologies.

### Metagraywacke

Metagraywacke — Medium-light-gray to medium-dark-gray; medium- to coarse-grained; foliated (ranges from massive to gneissic); equigranular to inequigranular; granoblastic to lepidoblastic; migmatitic; consists of quartz, plagioclase, biotite, muscovite, potassium feldspar, and minor garnet, opaque minerals, epidote, and apatite; thickness of layering ranges from decimeters to meters. Interlayered at all scales with other TFF lithologies.

**CZifb** Garnet-Mica schist — Very light-gray to greenish-gray to medium-gray; fine- to coarse-grained; strongly foliated; inequigranular; lepidoblastic to porphyroblastic; locally migmatitic; consists of approximately 50% muscovite, 35% quartz, 5% biotite, 5% garnet, 2% plagioclase feldspar, and trace opaque minerals; interlayered with other TFF lithologies.

**CZifm** Marble — Medium to dark gray; fine- to medium-grained; non- to weakly foliated; equigranular; granoblastic; consists of approximately 70% calcite and/or dolomite, 13% plagioclase, 12% quartz, 4% potassium feldspar and 1% muscovite.

**CZifn** Amphibolite — Amphibolite is typically mottled white to dark-green to black; fine- to coarse-grained; foliated; equigranular to nematoblastic; consists of hornblende, plagioclase, biotite, epidote group minerals, quartz, and minor garnet, chlorite, pyroxene, titanite, and opaque minerals. Commonly interlayered with other TFF lithologies.

**CZifn** Ultramafic bodies — Dark-green to silvery-grayish-green; fine- to medium-grained; non-foliated to strongly foliated; equigranular; granoblastic to nematoblastic to lepidoblastic; consists of tremolite/actinolite, relict pyroxene, hornblende, chlorite, talc, serpentine, relict olivine, opaque minerals, plagioclase feldspar, magnetite, spinel, and other accessory minerals. Compositions of altered ultramafic bodies are variable and mineralogical variations could not be mapped at a 1:24,000 scale.

**Zabsa** Alligator Back Metamorphic Suite Metasediment — Interlayered metamorphosed sandstones with compositions including arkosic arenite, biotite-bearing metawacke, and quartzite. Tan to medium-gray to light-green; fine- to medium-grained; foliated to locally mylonitic; equigranular to inequigranular; consists of quartz, feldspar, muscovite, biotite, and minor accessory minerals; notably contains little schist, amphibolite, or garnet.

### Meta-igneous Rocks

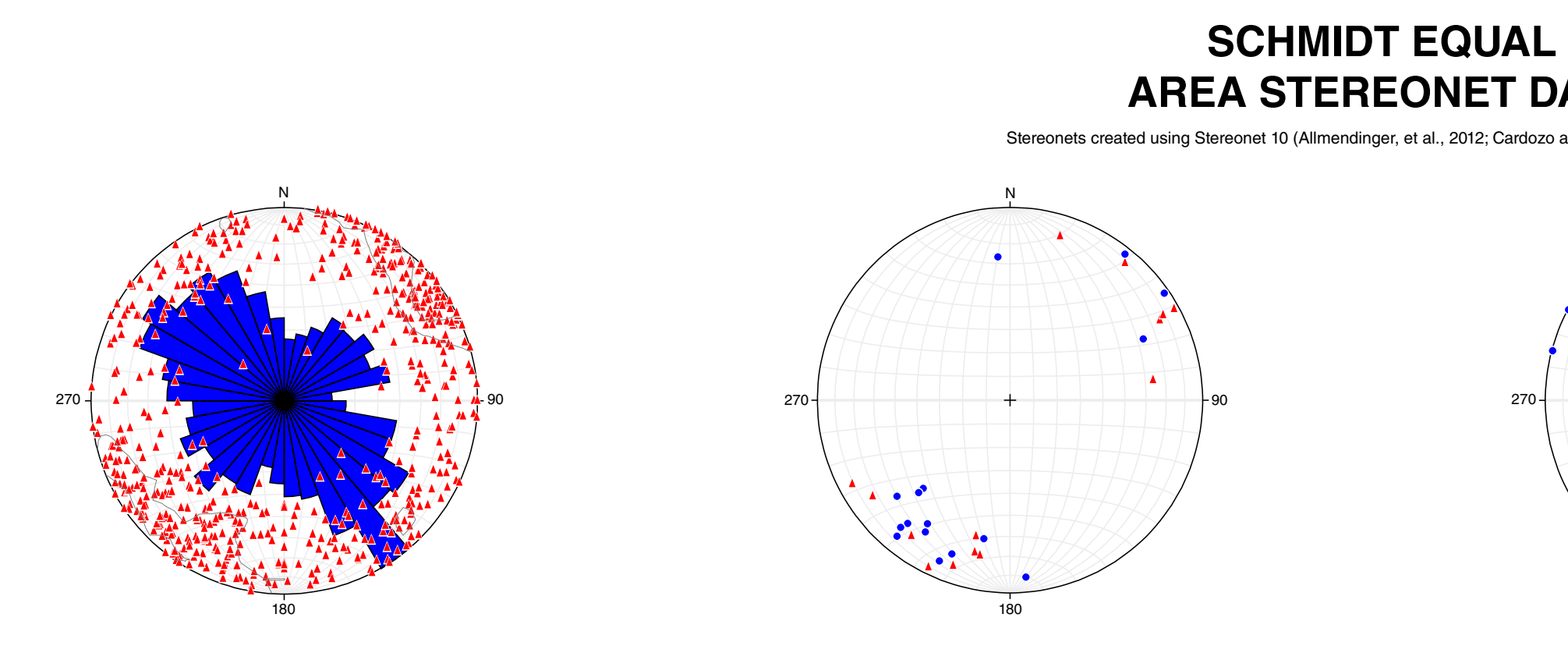
**Dpg** Porphyroclastic biotite gneiss — Heterogeneous mix of porphyroclastic and porphyroblastic, mylonitic biotite gneiss, quartz-feldspathic gneiss, granitic orthogneiss, felsic gneiss, phyllonite, mylonite, and amphibolite, with minor biotite metawacke and metasediment. Biotite gneiss is typically light-gray to grayish-black; well foliated; locally protomylonitic to ultramylonitic; medium- to coarse-grained; inequigranular; 2-10 mm sized porphyroblasts and/or porphyroclasts; lepidoblastic; consists of quartz, plagioclase, biotite, potassium feldspar, muscovite, minor epidote, garnet, and titanite. Radiometric age date of approximately 360 Ma (McAleer, personal communication, 2020).

**Ytc** Toms Creek granitic orthogneiss — Semi-massive variety is coarse grained and equigranular with little chlorite and muscovite; mylonitic variety is fine- to medium-grained and equigranular with alternating pink potassium feldspar layers with silver-green chlorite-muscovite layers; both varieties consist of potassium feldspar, quartz, plagioclase, muscovite, chlorite, and sericite; may contain small mafic/chloritic pods.

**mpa** Pegmatite and amphibolite — Heterogeneous mix of pegmatite, amphibolite, altered ultramafic rocks, and minor amounts of biotite gneiss; Unit present along contact of Cranberry Gneiss and metasediment.

**You** Cranberry Gneiss undivided — Granitic orthogneiss with minor amounts of biotite gneiss; white to light pink; medium- to coarse-grained; equigranular to inequigranular; mylonitic to protomylonitic; consists of quartz, plagioclase, potassium feldspar, muscovite, biotite, and minor amounts of opaque minerals, epidote, chlorite, and garnet.

<sup>1</sup>Mineral abundances are listed in decreasing order of abundance based upon visual estimates of hand samples and thin sections.



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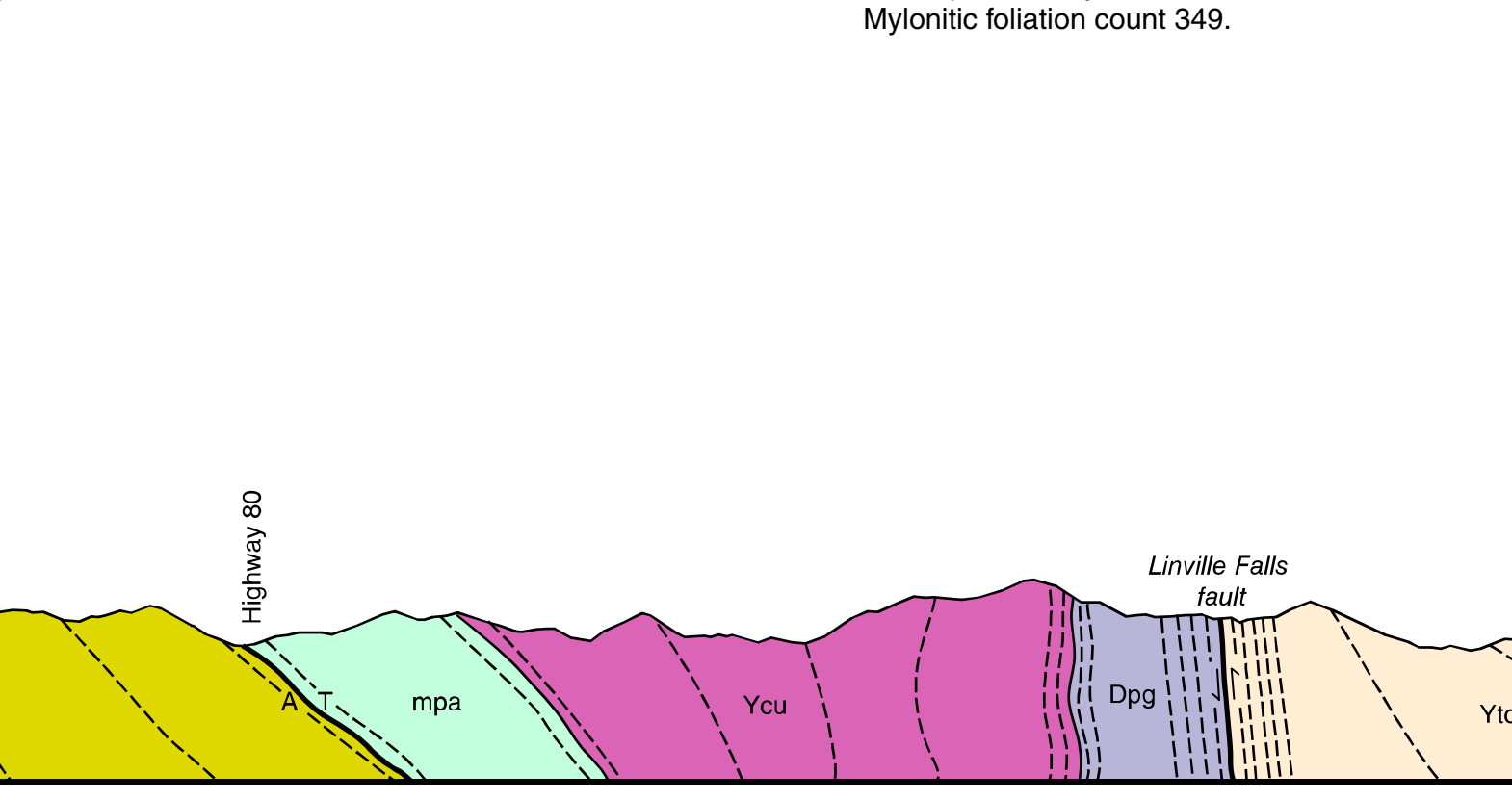
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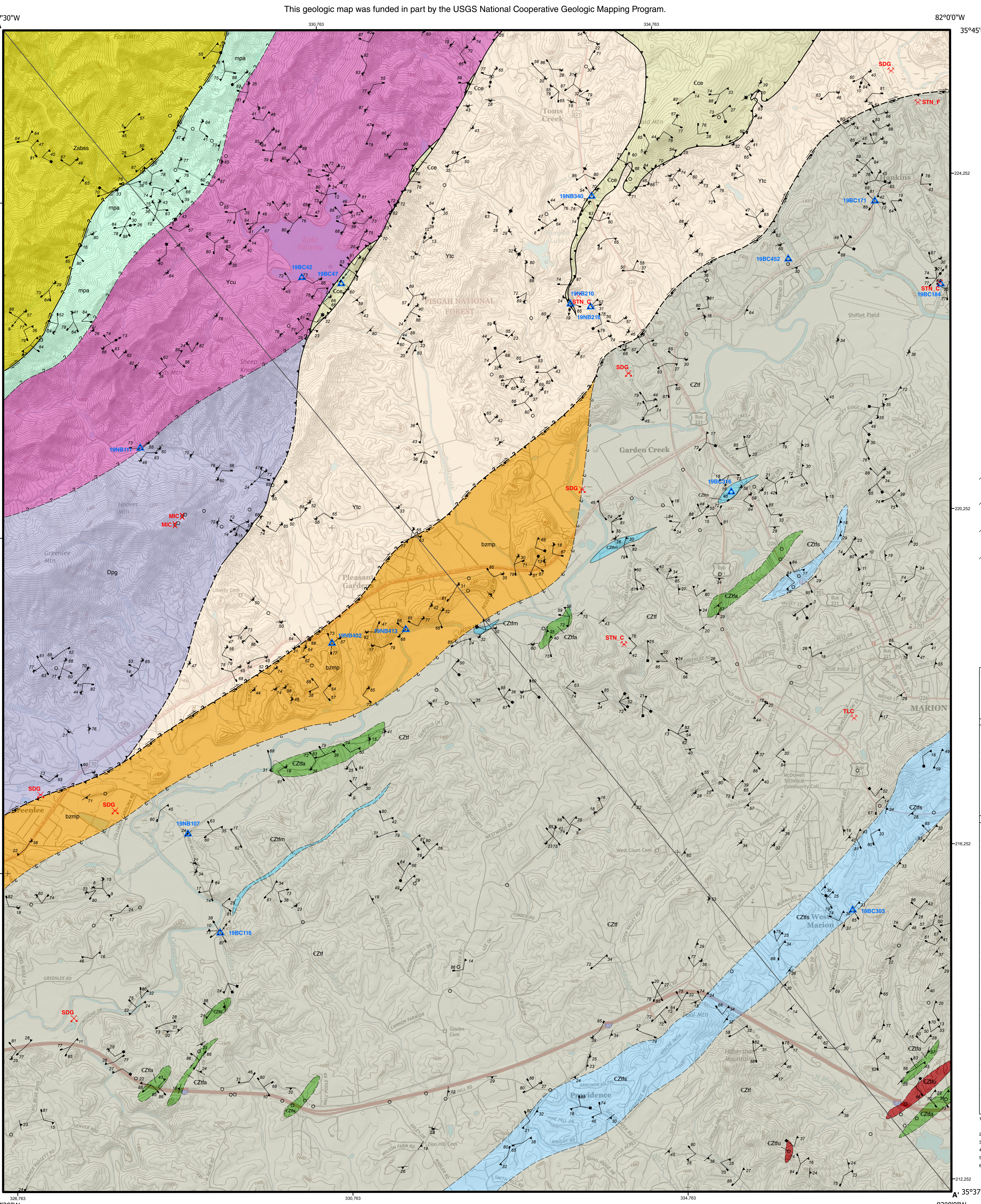
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## Bedrock Geologic Map of the Marion West 7.5-minute Quadrangle, McDowell County, North Carolina

By  
**Bart L. Cattanch, G. Nicholas Bozdog, and Sierra J. Isard**

Geology mapped from July 2019 to June 2020.  
Map preparation, digital cartography and editing by G. Nicholas Bozdog, Bart L. Cattanch, and Sierra J. Isard  
2020



### EXPLANATION OF MAP SYMBOLS

**CONTACTS**  
Zone of Confidence: 300m

Contact—Identity and existence certain, location accurate

Contact—Identity and existence questionable, location approximate

Contact—Identity and existence certain, location approximate, existence certain, and location accurate. Arrows show relative motion

Thrust fault (1st option)—Strike-slip fault, right-lateral offset—Identity and existence certain, location approximate. See teeth on upper (tectonically higher plate). Arrows show relative motion

Thrust fault (1st option)—Identity and existence certain, location accurate. See teeth on upper (tectonically higher plate).

### PLANAR FEATURES

(For multiple observations at one locality, symbols are joined at the "tail" ends of the strike lines)

Inclined metamorphic or tectonic foliation—Showing strike and dip

Inclined metamorphic or tectonic foliation, for multiple observations at one locality—Showing strike and dip

Vertical metamorphic or tectonic foliation—Showing strike

Vertical metamorphic or tectonic foliation, for multiple observations at one locality—Showing strike

Vertical mylonitic foliation—Showing strike

Inclined mylonitic foliation—Showing strike and dip

Inclined granitic foliation (origin not specified)—Showing strike and dip

Small, minor inclined joint—Showing strike and dip

Small, minor inclined joint, for multiple observations at one locality—Showing strike and dip

Small, minor vertical or near-vertical joint, for multiple observations at one locality—Showing strike

Small minor vertical or near-vertical joint—Showing strike

Inclined mylonitic foliation, for multiple observations at one locality—Showing strike and dip

Vertical mylonitic foliation, for multiple observations at one locality—Showing strike

### LINEAR FEATURES

Inclined aligned linear feature—Showing bearing and plunge

Inclined aligned, groove, or striation on fault surface—Showing bearing and plunge

Inclined fold hinges of generic type or orientation unspecified, small, minor fold—Showing bearing and plunge

Inclined generic (origin or type not known or not specified) lineation or linear structure—Showing bearing and plunge

### OTHER FEATURES

Float station

This section and whole rock analysis sample location

Prospect (pit or small open cut)

Abandoned sand, gravel, clay, or placer pit

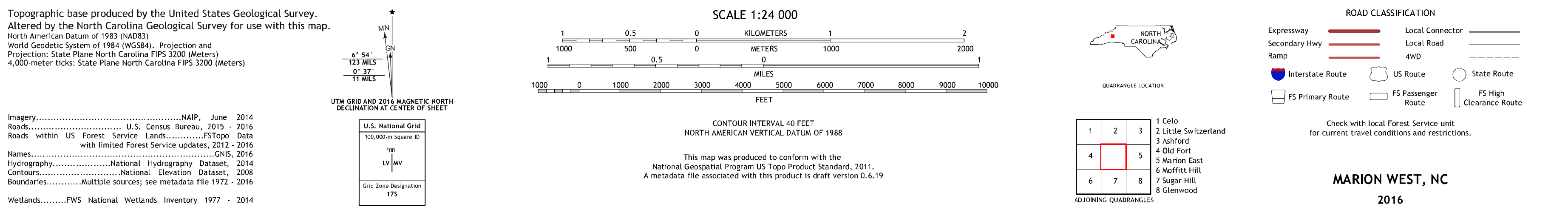
Abandoned open pit, quarry, or groya hole or linear structure

### NATURAL RESOURCES

MC - Mica SDG - Sand and gravel STN - Crushed stone STN - F - Flagstone TLO - Talc

### WHOLE ROCK ICP ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup> OF SELECTED SAMPLES

SAMPLE	MAJOR OXIDES IN PERCENT														
	SiO <sub>2</sub>	TiO <sub>2</sub>	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	FeO	MnO	MgO	ZnO	CaO	Na <sub>2</sub> O	K <sub>2</sub> O	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	SO <sub>3</sub>	LOI	TOTAL	
MC101	68.88	0.15	16.88	81.89	0.22	20.06	0.22	46.28	0.23	33.24	0.44	22.54	30.22	46.1	70.4
MC102	15.06	0.18	4.9	7.49	0.63	20.27	10.26	15.41	13.95	16.38	10.47	13.02	18.23	14.9	12.98
MC103	7.23	0.15	2.50	2.06	1.72	11.96	3.71	4.80	5.94	7.38	0.99	1.41	7.46	16.02	1.37
MC104	1.89	1.86	0.29	0.22	0.26	1.26	1.42	1.45	1.51	2.26	2.7	0.07	0.41	5.72	0.18
MC105	1.46	1.01	0.08	0.08	0.09	27.16	1.88	1.88	1.75	2.36	1.12	3.46	7.01	3.2	0.32
MC106	2.78	2.09	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.79	1.6	2.3	2.42	3.79	3.36	4.41	4.85	3.3	3.92
MC107	1.82	2.84	2.48	2.83	2.9	1.48	2.23	2.31	2.1	4.79	3.46	4.75	3.4	4.0	4.17
MC108	12.4	0.88	0.45	0.76	0.33	1.36	0.38	0.78	0.74	0.78	0.71	0.07	0.99	0.42	0.53
MC109	0.15	0.12	0.01	0.02	0.11	0.17	0.11	0.16	0.21	0.19	0.00	0.40	0.48	0.38	0.00
MC110	0.13	0.13	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.07	0.09	0.21	0.08
MC111	0.08	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00
MC112	1.1	0.1	0.15	0.8	0.07	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
MC113	39.81	99.65	99.65	99.67	99.66	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67	99.67



This is an Open-File Map. It has been reviewed internally for conformity with North Carolina Geological Survey mapping standards and with the North American Stratigraphic Code. Further revisions or corrections to this Open File map may occur. Some station data omitted from map to improve readability. Please contact the North Carolina Geological Survey for complete observation and thin-section data.