

MOONSHINE & MOTORSPORTS TRAIL

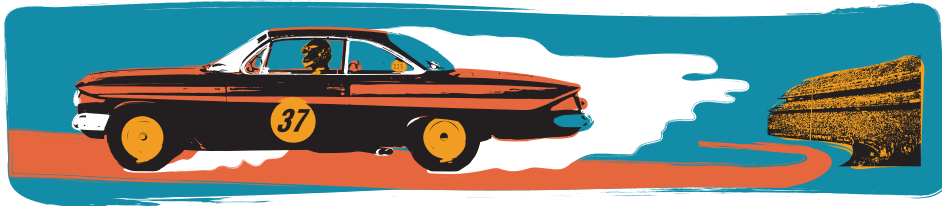
The What, When, and Why

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Initiation

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What is Moonshine and Motorsports?

As designated in the 2021 state budget, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) is developing a Moonshine and Motorsports Trail to highlight the state's unique history surrounding distilling and stock-car racing. Distilling grew out of the state's rich agricultural and social history. Speed-hungry bootleggers eventually began challenging each other in modified stock cars, giving birth to a multibillion-dollar industry that now attracts legions of devoted followers across the nation and world. With

this trail, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources is providing a consistent holding space for a history that has touched every part of our state, and a narrative that supports rich engagement with the resources, industries, and communities whose knowledge, commitment, and grit make NC a premier home for distilling and stock car racing.

Why It Matters

Distilling and racing both drive sprawling and influential industries. Prior to prohibition, NC claimed the most family-owned distilleries of any state, and its racing roots run deep. Importantly, both industries have a rural background. Distilling relies on natural resources, with water and climate being central to producing liquor, along with the fruits and vegetables that are distilled for its creation. Family recipes, handed down for generations, codify this interwoven relationship with the land.

Scores of remote dirt tracks drew communities together across NC, and rural fields filled with agricultural workers and small-town families who enjoyed (and still enjoy) the competition and entertainment that racing continues to provide. Additionally, many drivers, mechanics, distillers, and creators came from underrepresented groups—women, African Americans, Native Americans, and low-income agricultural workers are central to this narrative. Their stories deserve to be told, as do the stories of those who are carrying on the legacies of the original groundbreakers.

It's important to provide a space for these often-unsung stories and a map of important racing and/or distilling locations in order that North Carolinians and visitors alike can access these spaces, driving tourism, economic development, and a sense of pride in two interwoven traditions that are uniquely North Carolinian. Those businesses and communities who seek to build on these traditions can use this cultural trail as validation for their enterprise.

Locations on the Trail

DNCR has identified 8 initial locations on this trail. Each has a history of racing, distilling, or both. The department has produced blogs and media surrounding each, as well as an upcoming traveling exhibit, demonstrating the locations' connection to this history. [Explore the locations here](#)

FAQ's

What is a cultural trail?

Great question! There are many examples of cultural trails in NC; including the [African American Heritage Commission Civil Rights Trail](#), the [Blue Ridge Craft Trails](#), and many more. These, along with the [Moonshine and Motorsports Cultural Trail](#), show the spaces and places that have mattered in a particular historical and/or cultural timeline, whether that is Civil Rights, Folk art, or the down-home history of stock car racing and distilling. While the Moonshine and Motorsports Trail is not like traditional natural trails in the sense that it does not provide a specific walkable route, it shows on the North Carolina map the breadth of the history of distilling and racing. We encourage visitors and residents alike to visit the locations on the trail, whose surrounding communities have much to offer.

How can I get involved?

Visit the Trail! [Check out our website](#), make a trip to a [location](#), and enjoy the history. If you take pictures, tag the department (@ncculture on all channels) and let us know your thoughts!

Submit a story! Have a piece of the story to share? Let us know [here!](#)

Stay up to date on our traveling exhibit!

[Utilize our toolkit with logos, social media graphics, and more!](#)



Helpful Links

[Visit these places where moonshine and motorsports meet!](#)

[Go to a Race in NC](#)

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