

Our Backyard and Beyond
Blue Ridge Adventures, Lakeside Wonders, and Let's Get Going

Design Intent: Blue Ridge Adventures
Blue Ridge Adventures carries you high into the rolling peaks, where winding roads lead to views that seem to stretch forever. Scenic drives curve through misty valleys and up forested slopes, each turn revealing a new vista more breathtaking than the last. Along the way, black bears roam the ridges, songbirds fill the air with music, and wildflowers paint the trails in shifting colors with the seasons. From sparkling waterfalls tucked into hidden hollows to overlooks that open wide to the horizon, the Blue Ridge Mountains invite exploration at every bend.

Design Intent: Lakeside Wonders
The lakes await with a new adventure shimmering across the surface, hidden in coves and along quiet shorelines. Pause for a moment and listen... Can you tell the splash of a leaping bass from the call of a loon echoing across the water? Breathe in deep — that fresh, earthy scent drifts from damp soil and sun-warmed pines. Watch the ripples spread as ducks paddle by, while herons stalk patiently at the water's edge. Beneath the surface, fish dart between reeds and rocks, each part playing a role in the lake's living rhythm. From the sandy beaches to the shady inlets, a thousand stories wait to be uncovered if you know how to look, listen, and piece them together.

Design Intent: Let's Get Going
There is a world of adventure waiting to be explored. Our minds race with thoughts of trips in the car with the windows down, wind blowing through our hair ... so Let's Get Going! We dream of days gathered around the campfire, telling stories and bonding out in the fresh air. Pack up the trailer, pick a pathway and take a chance as you roll on towards destinations near and far. Most of all, open your heart and mind as you try new things, meet people of all kinds and delve into the many manners in which to navigate the amazing voyages that await you.

Technology Components
Magic Window - Collection of video clips

Mural Features

- Blue Ridge Mountains - The Blue Ridge Mountains are a mountain range that stretches through several states in the eastern United States and are part of the larger Appalachian Mountain system. Known for their rolling peaks, rich forests, and bluish haze, the mountains get their name from the blue-colored mist created by trees releasing natural oils into the air. The Blue Ridge Mountains are among the oldest mountain ranges in the world, formed more than one billion years ago.
- Mountain Reservoir - A mountain reservoir is a large body of stored water located in or near mountainous areas, often created by building a dam across a river or valley. Reservoirs collect water from rain, melting snow, and streams, providing water for communities. These environments are often surrounded by forests, rocky slopes, and wildlife, making them important natural and environmental resources.
- Rainbow Trout - The rainbow trout is a freshwater fish commonly found in rivers, streams, lakes, and mountain reservoirs across North America and other parts of the world. Rainbow trout are known for their silvery bodies, dark speckles, and the pink or reddish stripe that runs along their sides. They usually grow between 12–30 inches long and eat insects, small fish, crustaceans, and other tiny aquatic animals found in the water.
- River Otter - The North American river otter is a semiaquatic freshwater mammal found near rivers, lakes, wetlands, and streams throughout much of North America. River otters have long, streamlined bodies, thick brown fur, webbed feet, and strong tails that help them swim quickly through the water. Most adult river otters grow about 3–4 feet long and can weigh between 10–30 pounds. They eat fish, frogs, crayfish, and other small aquatic animals, and are known for sliding down muddy or snowy riverbanks as part of their play and social behavior.
- Common Loon - The common loon is a large water bird found on lakes and reservoirs across parts of North America, especially in northern forested regions during the summer. Common loons are about 2–3 feet long with black-and-white patterned feathers, red eyes, and sharp pointed bills. They eat mainly fish, along with insects, crustaceans, and other small aquatic animals they catch by diving underwater. Loons are famous for their echoing calls that carry across lakes, and they are excellent swimmers.
- Painted Turtle - The painted turtle is a small freshwater turtle commonly found in ponds, lakes, and marshes across North America. Painted turtles usually grow between 4–10 inches long and are known for their smooth dark shells and bright red, orange, or yellow markings along their legs and shell. They eat aquatic plants, insects, small fish, and other tiny water animals. Painted turtles are often seen basking on logs or rocks in the sun, and during winter they can survive in icy water by slowing down their bodies and using very little oxygen.
- Black Bear - The American black bear is a large mammal found in forests, mountains, and wooded areas across much of North America. Adult black bears typically weigh between 100–600 pounds and can stand over 5 feet tall when on their hind legs, although they are usually smaller in the eastern United States. They are omnivores and eat a wide variety of foods, including berries, nuts, insects, grasses, fish, and sometimes small animals.

Mural Features

- Logging Truck - Logging trucks were introduced in 1913 in preparation for World War I, when Sitka spruce was needed for airplane construction and trees near waterways became scarce due to demand. They are very large vehicles designed to transport timber. They are built to travel on both off-road forest trails and highways and feature reinforced suspensions with cranes for loading logs.
- Wild Turkey - A Wild Turkey is a large bird found in forests, woodlands, grasslands, and even suburban areas across much of North America. Wild turkeys can stand about 3–4 feet tall and are known for their long legs, fanned tail feathers, and featherless red and blue head. They are omnivores and eat a varied diet that includes seeds, nuts, berries, insects, and small reptiles. Although they spend most of their time on the ground, wild turkeys are strong runners and can fly short distances into trees to roost at night.
- Bridge - A bridge is a structure that was first designed as a practical solution for crossing obstacles such as rivers, valleys, and roads, allowing people and goods to travel more easily. Bridges can be found all over the world in both natural and urban environments. They are built from a variety of materials, including wood, stone, steel, and reinforced concrete, depending on their design and purpose.
- Bobcat - A bobcat is a medium-sized wild cat found throughout forests, deserts, swamps, and suburban edges across most of the United States, Mexico, and southern Canada. Bobcats typically weigh between 15–35 pounds and are about twice the size of a domestic cat, with short tails, tufted ears, and spotted coats that help them blend into their environment. They are mostly solitary, are carnivores, and primarily hunt and eat rabbits, rodents, birds, and sometimes small deer.

T**hemes to Explore: Blue Ridge Adventures**

- Mountain Habitats
- Weather
- Recreation
- Wind and Air Movement
- Maps
- Plants and Animals
- Seasons
- Rocks and Gems
- Rivers, Streams, and Waterfalls
- Culture and Traditions

Themes to Explore: Lakeside Wonders

- Water Exploration
- Erosion
- Plants and Animals
- Ecosystems
- Bird Migration
- Rocks, Sand, and Mud
- Recreation
- Shadows and Reflection
- Conservation

Themes to Explore: Let's Get Going

- Recreation
- Transportation
- Traveling and Vacations
- Maps
- Force and Motion
- Environmental Print
- Architecture and Design (Building)
- Following Directions

M**ounted Artifacts**

- Flat-bottomed Boat - A flat-bottomed boat is a boat with a level base. This design allows the boat to float in very shallow water, making it ideal for rivers, swamps, and calm lakes. These low-speed boats are commonly used for fishing, hunting, or transport in shallow water.
- Camping Trailer - Camping Trailer-A camping trailer is a wheeled vehicle designed to be towed by a car or truck as a living space while traveling.
- Cattails - Cattails- A cattail is a tall, reed-like wetland plant with long, slender leaves and a distinctive brown, sausage-shaped flower spike. Found near ponds, marshes, and lakes, it provides habitat for wildlife and helps filter water. In late summer, the flower head releases fluffy seeds that disperse in the wind.
- Hot Air Balloon - A hot air balloon is made up of three main components: the envelope, the basket, and the burner system. When the air inside the envelope is heated, its molecules move faster and spread apart, making the air less dense than the cooler air outside. As a result, the balloon rises. The Montgolfier brothers (France) first demonstrated an unmanned hot air balloon in 1783.
- Commercial Airplane - A commercial airplane transports passengers and cargo between airports. They are operated by an airline and follow a specific schedule. The two major manufacturers in the commercial aircraft market are Boeing and Airbus. The number of commercial flights in the U.S. is estimated to be around 12,857 a day with each plane making 3-4 flights.
- de Havilland Canada DHC-3 Otter - The de Havilland Canada DHC-3 Otter is a single-engine utility aircraft that was developed in Canada in the 1950s by the de Havilland Canada. It was designed to carry passengers and cargo into remote areas, especially places with rough terrain, lakes, or snowy conditions. The aircraft is known for its durable design and can be fitted with wheels, skis, or floats for landing on different surfaces. The DHC-3 Otter has been widely used for bush flying, scientific research, rescue operations, and transporting supplies to hard-to-reach locations.

To Find Out More

- National Geographic: Experiential Learning
- World Atlas
- Lonely Planet Travel
- South Carolina Department of Agriculture
- Discover South Carolina

List of Hansa Animals

- Black Bear, Ducks (Male and Female), Chicks

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