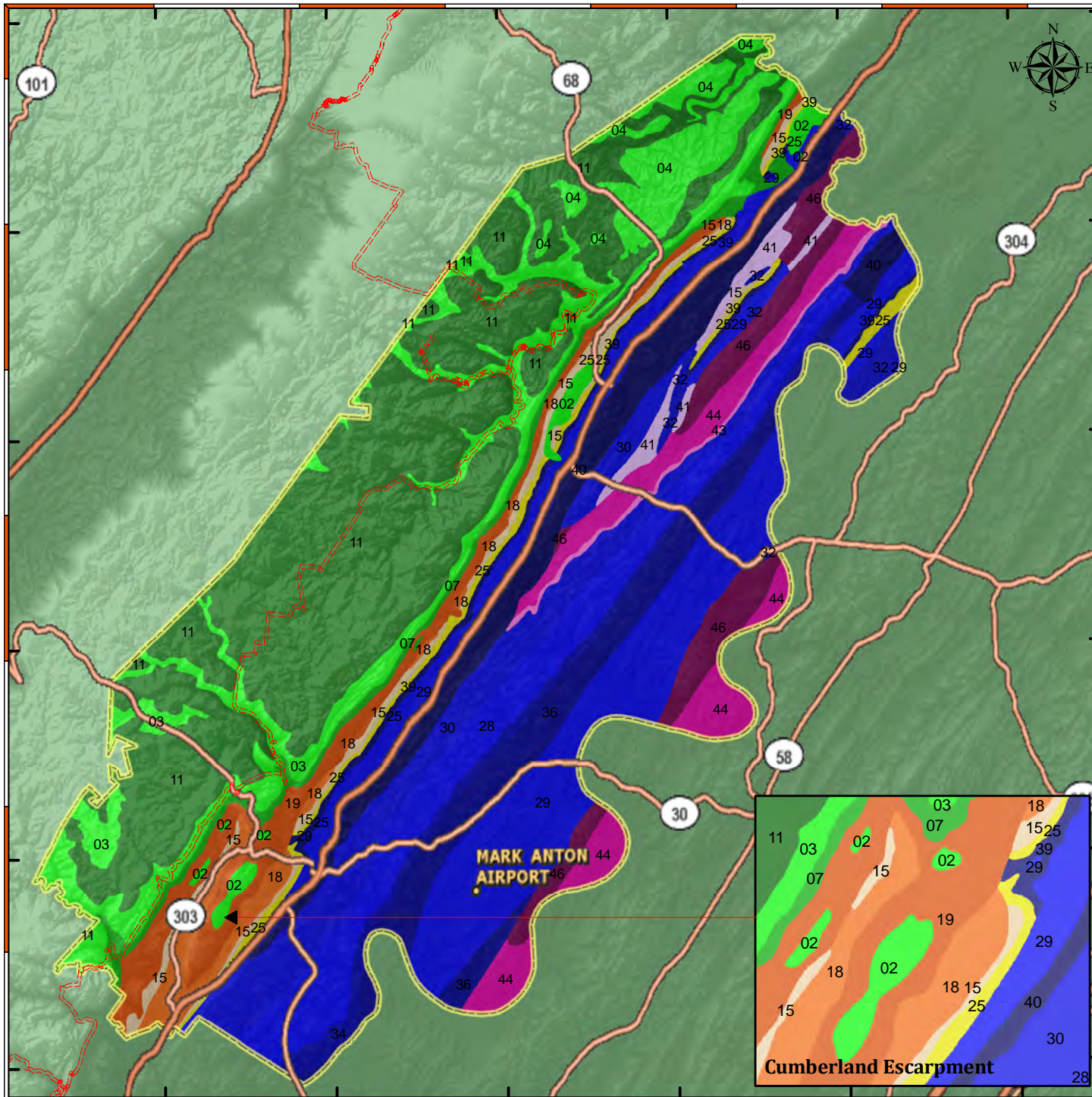


Rhea County Geological Formation



Rhea County is on the southwestern margin of East Tennessee. About two-fifths of the county is part of the Cumberland Plateau and its eastern escarpment. Relatively level strata of Pennsylvanian-age sandstones, shales, and conglomerates cap the plateau, along with a few coal seams, while Mississippian-age limestones, shales, and sandstones form the escarpment. The Valley and Ridge makes up the remaining three-fifths of the county. Underlying rock strata consist of highly faulted and folded beds of Cambrian- and Ordovician-age limestones, dolomites, and shales. It is a broad, high tableland that runs parallel to the county's western side. Elevations on the tableland on or near the Rhea-Bledsoe County line average about 2,000 feet. Near Cumberland Escarpment, the rugged wall forming the plateau's eastern side, elevations gradually lower to 1,800 feet in the southwestern part of the county.

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