



2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Environmental and Conservation Organization

October 2010

ECO has grown in significant ways over the past year to better meet the challenges in Henderson County and the region to continue to be a strong voice for the environment. Over 600 volunteers provided more than 7000 hours of times throughout the year to keep ECO viable and strong. Since most of ECO's work occurs through our committees, the committee reports below should offer a good synopsis of our progress:

Advocating for Green Infrastructure

The Green Infrastructure Committee (GIC) has been working diligently in 2010 to insure that land use policies truly protect our natural resources. Our tools include forums and workshops to inform the public, advocacy to insure that local policymakers understand that the public wants our natural heritage protected and community campaigns to involve concerned citizens across the demographic spectrum. Two priorities for this year were adopting a local stormwater ordinance and moving toward real steep slope rules. Also important was a campaign to restore the Mills River, given that the South Fork of the Mills River was recently placed on the 303(d) list.

With ECO's urging, Jon Calabria presented a workshop to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners and many ECO members attended the public hearing to express their concern for having a local stormwater ordinance that would be locally monitored. The Commissioners agreed and the ordinance was adopted. While it was not all we had hoped, it is certainly a solid step forward. On steep slopes protections, ECO's GIC held a well-attended Steep Slopes forum featuring geologists from the NC Geological Survey who made it clear that Henderson County's current ordinance that begins at 60% is dangerous and not supported by the data. The Survey is currently doing landslide mapping of the county which should be done by year's end, presenting an opportunity for more advocacy to finally pass realistic steep slopes rules. Finally, the GIC has begun to investigate abandoned developments in order to develop a strategy that would require principals, banks, or the county to shore up developments that are damaging precious ecosystems. ECO's GIC and Water Quality Committees and SWAT teams might assist the county's Erosion Control Officer with evaluating the condition of abandoned developments and their effect on beleaguered watersheds. On the Mills, a concerted and collaborative effort began to rehabilitate this important waterway and provide financial incentives to farmers to take steps that will eliminate or attenuate pesticide runoff and pesticide-laden sediment from getting into this drinking water watershed.

Supporting County Recycling

The Recycling Committee has been hard at work to keep recycling at the forefront in the county and the City of Hendersonville. Based on ECO's long-term work on this issue, the county finally adopted a capital plan for the transfer station which would include the construction of a materials recovery facility and better and safer access to the recycling area. Additionally, the county will require that every wastehauler pick up recycling beginning January 1, 2011 and other rules were instituted to assure the safety of the trucks traveling on roadways.

The Recycling committee organized a forum to educate the public on recycling plans which covered the proposed upgrades to the recycling area on Stoney Mountain Road, as well as improvements needed for public events and festivals on Main Street and at Jackson Park. In addition, the Recycling Committee demonstrated the value and need to have bins on Main Street full-time through surveys performed at the Garden Jubilee. The Committee also made sure that the Jubilee had a recycling component to it. ECO and the Recycling Committee also increased awareness about recycling while wowing local residents and visitors by participating in the Apple Festival parade under the slogan "Eat, Love, Recycle" using an

electric car and two wagons to collect plastic bottles from attendees. In November, a trip to the world's largest recycling plant in Spartanburg, South Carolina is planned, as well as a visit to a plant in Enka, North Carolina, that makes new bottles from old ones. The priority for the committee continues to be to expand recycling efforts and to insure that every festival has a recycling component that is the responsibility of festival organizers.

Protecting Water Quality

ECO's Water Quality Committee spent 2010 continuing to monitor Henderson County's six watersheds while expanding the scope and breadth of the program. Given the closure of UNCA's Environmental Quality Institute (EQI), ECO had to decide whether to proceed with its VWIN program despite the increase in cost of over \$10,000 annually. Not wanting to lose valuable data or trends analysis, we bit the bullet and hired a new lab until EQI was reopened as an independent nonprofit. Biomonitoring has expanded its scientific efficacy through the work of two highly qualified AmeriCorps Water Quality Administrators, Kara Raymond and now Katherine Freeman, and the great stewardship of Lucy Butler and Doreen Blue. Since Eric Romanisyn, our biologist has produced our first annual report for biomonitoring and given our upgraded protocol, we can now better synchronize our results with biomonitoring teams in Haywood, Madison and Buncombe counties.

Program expansion also included the launch of a bacterial monitoring program that monitors wastewater treatment plants. An early success was that one plant with very high rates of bacteria discharge corrected the problem after ECO stepped in to work with the operator and owner. Stream Watch Action Teams (SWAT) were put into operation this year and they will play an active role in assessing abandoned developments that have caused damage to streams due to neglect. The Mills River is a special area for concern given the recent 303(d) listing. The WQ and GIC Committees will play a role in collaborating with other community partners to hopefully move forward with an action plan that will resolve this situation. Adopt-A-Stream continues to grow in both importance and popularity as new groups and communities adopt streams nearly every month. Diamond Brand's coupon incentive and supplies provided by First Citizen's Bank, Ingles, Walgreens, Food Lion and Harris Teeter coupled with the Water Quality Committee's great organization of volunteers teams set the stage for another successful Big Sweep in 2010.

Finally, ECO began its expansion work into Transylvania County with a series of meetings with local residents and organizations in the hopes of starting a water quality program there in the coming months. Four possible VWIN and biomonitoring sites are being looked at and a potential sponsor for two sites has been identified.

Supporting Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation

The Energy Committee's work began with a bang as it launched ECO's largest event ever, ECO's celebration of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Through the work of 60-plus volunteers and over a dozen community partners, over 600 attendees enjoyed both the entertainment and educational components of the festival that culminated with 150 concert-goers enjoying the sweet sounds of Shannon Whitworth and Balsam Range. A new program, *The Greening of Downtown*, was launched in 2009, resulting in energy audits for at least 17 businesses, a \$52,200 energy grant to upgrade three downtown businesses for heating and air conditioning, lighting, insulation, and solar hot water installation and another grant written for \$90,000 to fund several additional businesses' green energy upgrades.

Given the downturned economy, promoting businesses who have taken green steps is important. As a result, the Energy Committee initiated discussions with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a green business award that encourages and rewards businesses who are good stewards of our natural resources. The award looks at how businesses recycle, limit packaging, shored up their building envelope, encourage carpooling and more. Forums and workshops designed to educate the public about ways to decrease their footprint, as well as ways to save money on heating costs were held throughout the year and will continue into December. 2010's Green Home Tour spotlighted some amazing green homes in our region and inspired homeowners to take big green steps through a solar workshop held all day. Project Greenlight continues to offer local churches a chance to become better stewards of creation by lowering their carbon footprint and decreasing energy and resource usage.

Financing Our Environmental Protection

Few of us can remember a time that was quite as “interesting” as 2010. Nonprofits of all types have faced numerous challenges. Yet living in this sacred place beside majestic mountains, crystal streams and a strong community, we know how important it is to have a strong voice protecting our natural heritage. Although our costs rose tremendously due to increased expenses for water quality and other programs, strong membership and community support, fundraising events, grants and corporate sponsorships helped get us through. ECO is fortunate to be well-capitalized and boasts a safe level of cash reserves. However, we must be mindful of the uncertainty that exists and the potential for continued strain in the economy. As such, ECO needs member support and strong fundraising efforts more than ever in order to continue its mission to protect the natural beauty and heritage of WNC. Our successful fundraising events in 2010 included:

- February – Annual Heritage Apple Tree Sale
- April – Azalea Gardens Tour hosted by the local chapter of the American Azalea Society
 - Earth Day 40th Anniversary Festival
- June – Marvelous Malarkey Full Moon Follies
- August – 3rd Annual Green Home Tour
- September – ECO Whitewater Day at Green River Adventures
- October – ECO Environmental Film Fest at Hendersonville Little Theatre

Other events included: Christmas Tree Recycling, Water Quality Master Classes, Apple Heritage Traditions lecture and tasting, Mudslides, Landslides and the History of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Trainings in Biomonitoring, SWAT teams, Bacterial Testing and Adopt A Stream.

Business & Community Sponsors – *Please support our sponsors !!!*

In spite of the tough economy local business sponsors have supported our work and we can't thank them enough. They include: Ace Hardware of North Asheville, Advanced Thermal Solutions, Asheville Hoops, Asheville Visitors Center, Asheville Wine Market, BackHome Magazine, Balsam Range, Beddingfield's Tree Farm, BiLo, The Biltmore Estate, Blue Moon Water, Blue Ridge Community College, BlueRidgeNow.com, Blue Water Seafood, Bold Life Magazine, Carolina Ace Hardware, Carolina Native Landscapes, Chef Starr FoodService, Children of the Earth (Families United), The Community Foundation of Henderson County, Conservation Pros/Comfort Central, Diamond Brand Outdoors, Duke Energy Foundation, Echo Data Systems, eco-mow LLC, Fairview Chiropractic, Fatz Café, Fazio Golf Design, Flat Rock Playhouse YouTheater, Flat Rock Wine Shoppe, First Citizens Bank, Food Lion, Four Circles Recovery Center, The Fresh Market, Girl Scouts of America Troops 225 / 30225 / 429, Global Warming Task Force, Green River Adventures, Harris Teeter, Henderson County, Henderson County High Schools, Henderson County Master Gardeners, Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District, Henderson County Solid Waste Division, Hendersonville Community Co-op, Hendersonville Little Theatre, Hendersonville Printing Co., Hendersonville Times-News, Hendersonville Tree Board, Hendersonville Visitors Center, Hendersonville Water Dept., Higher Ground Rain Water Solutions, Highland Brewing Company, Holy Family Church, Home Builders Association of Hendersonville, Hubba Hubba Woodfired Smokehouse, Ingles Markets, J&D Produce, Jongo Java, Ken Gaylord Architects, Kilwin's, Laurel Hill Nursery, League of Women Voters, Luther Smith & Associates, Main Street Café, Mast General Store, McFarlan Bakery, Mountain 1st Bank, Mountain Xpress, NCSU Cooperative Extension, Pardee Hospital, Peace at Hand, Peddler Steak House, PPG Olympic Paint & Stain, Project Challenge, Project Conserve/AmeriCorps, Purple Sage, Rabbit & Co., Rare Bird Creative, RBC Bank, REI, Rotary Club of Hendersonville, Saluda Wine and Cheese Shop, Sam's Club, Season's Restaurant at Highland Lake Inn, Shannon Whitworth, Sideline Pics LLC / Greenby3 LLC, Slick Rock Country Emporium, Southern Energy and Environmental (SEE) Expo, Spectrum Youth Home, A Storage Place, Sunburst Trout, Sundance Power Systems, Surya Biofertilizers, Talisman Academy, Team ECCO, Thai Spice Restaurant, Three Arrows Cattle, Three Chopt Sandwich Shop, Town of Laurel Park, Two Guys Pizza & Ribs, Underground Baking, VERVE Magazine, Visual Design, Vue Wine Bar, Walgreen's, West First Wood-Fired Pizza, Wild Birds Unlimited – Hendersonville, Wildflour Bakery, WNC Functional Health Center, WNCW 88.7FM, Mathew G. Young, DDS, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and many more.

2010 Board of Directors

Chris Youngblood, President/Treasurer
Rich Bowerman, Vice President
Jeri Peterson, Secretary
John Avery
Rich DeSimone
Ryan Lubbers
Harrison Metzger
Jim Monahan (beginning in August)
Nancy Tanker (through June)

Staff

Executive Director – David Weintraub
Administrative Assistant – Susan Harris
Bookkeeper (volunteer) – Nancy Waddell
AmeriCorps Water Quality Administrator –
Kara Raymond (through July), Katherine
Freeman (beginning in September)
Interns - Matt Foss, Megan Williams
(Energy), Josh Glover (GIC), Alex Martin,
Tommie Phelan, Cub Hope, Jamie Wyatt,
Jenai Bounds (Water)

Committee & Event Chairs

Big Sweep – Bill Garrison
Bacterial Monitoring – Bill Moore
Bio-Monitoring – Doreen Blue / Lucy Butler
Christmas Tree Recycling – Doreen Blue
Earth Day Festival Expo – George Tregay
Energy Committee Chair – George Tregay
Green Home Tour – Matt Foss
Green Infrastructure Committee Chairs –
Jerry David & Jeri Peterson
Heritage Apple Tree Sale – Bruce Lowe
Marvelous Malarkey – Katie Breckheimer
Recycling Comm. Chair – Susane Brown
VWIN Coordinator – Jim and Sharon Spicer
Water Quality Comm. Chair – Bill Garrison

Advisory Committee

Linda Block	Frank Hoyle
Paul Bockoven	Jeff Jennings
Tom Davis	Chuck McGrady
Ned Doyle	Michele Skeelee
Richard Freudenberger	Casey Thurman
Ken Weitzen	

Fund Balances October 1, 2009 to September 20, 2010

Beginning Fund Balance		\$116,097
Income Sources:		
Fundraising Work	\$68,688	
Membership	\$15,910	
Grants & Foundations	\$49,000	
General Support	\$ 5,789	
Total Income	\$139,387	
Expenses	\$124,181	
Ending Fund Balance		\$131,303

What the Future Holds

In many respects, we are traveling on uncharted waters. What the state of the economy will be, the jobs and housing market, tourism and more is anyone's guess. What we can definitely say is that the future depends upon a strong community that is less dependent on resources from the outside by developing its own self-reliance. For thousands of years, this community was inhabited by people who knew how to build their own homes, grow their own food and produce many of their own products. Today we are almost totally dependent on shipments from the international market to do simple things like blow our noses! Protecting our local resources, lowering our carbon footprint and making our community less vulnerable to economic or fuel depletion shocks requires a more inter-connected community. That's why ECO has joined with Transition Hendersonville to work on rebuilding our community resilience. With ECO's focus on environmental preservation and Transition's focus on long-term local prosperity, we are excited about rebuilding a community that is more close-knit, more self-reliant and can share the bounty of the tremendous human and natural resources WNC has to offer. Other issues we'll be tackling include focusing on the consequences of abandoned development to water quality, better steep slope rules, more convenient and effective recycling and recycling education, more community involvement in water monitoring and moving our community to a greener, more energy efficient, less fossil-fuel laden energy future.