



Green Home Tour Features the Area's Finest

ECO's Annual Green Home Tour focuses this year not only on homes that showcase green technology, but shines the limelight on sustainable, environmentally friendly homes that leave a small footprint. This self-guided driving tour features homes that save homeowners from high energy costs and include water conservation features, edible gardens and onsite tree reclamation, and homes that work with the natural

Green Home Tour
Focusing on Sustainable WNC Homes
Saturday, August 20th 10-4
For tickets: 692-0385 or eco-wnc.org

environment.

The size, location, and unique features of these homes are great examples of how area homeowners can lead more sustainable lifestyles that lower their carbon footprint and minimize the adverse effects on the local environment.

One hundred years ago, the residents of this community had no access to cheap oil or technology, yet they lived fulfilling lives without worrying about doing without. This year's Green Home Tour will be a bridge from yesteryear to today, demonstrating that sustainable living is not only do-able, but easy on the pocketbook and more protective of our natural heritage.

We are still looking for homes! For tickets, to become a tour sponsor, or feature your home contact ECO at 692-0385 or www.eco-wnc.org. ■

Water Quality Monitoring Reveals Environmental Impacts

The problems facing streams and rivers are complex. Tackling them requires gathering as much information as possible on the health of the river. That's where volunteers of all ages can help.

Besides trash, what else exists in our streams? This is the task of ECO's biomonitoring volunteers.

To learn more about the health of our streams and rivers, biomonitorers look closely at the surface of the water, check under rocks, and kick the gravel bottom, and hopefully find that the river is alive with insects, crustaceans, and worms. These are macroinvertebrates, animals that don't have backbones but are visible to the naked eye.

The data from ECO's biomonitoring program provides a picture of the biodiversity of the watershed over the past 9 years. Insects are one of the best biological indicators of stream

quality. By establishing years of macroinvertebrate data at the same monitoring sites, trends within the macroin-



Sediment flowing into Shaw Creek from the roadside.

vertebrate community become apparent. Stable, rising or declining insect communities indicate areas in the watershed needing enhancement or

protection.

Analyses of the insect communities can also help measure the impact of restoration programs and changes in land use over time.

A healthy river supports many species of macroinvertebrates. Insects such as mayflies, stoneflies, beetles, and caddisflies that require clean, well-oxygenated water are especially common. This past April found ECO's biomonitorers once again

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Committee Changes Name, Expands Focus

With a new name, the **Green Energy and Sustainability Committee** is expanding its scope beyond energy conservation to promote sustainable lifestyles and business practices.

The **1st Annual Environmental Stewardship Award** was awarded to Jongo Java for exceptional contributions to promote sustainability across all their business operations. Eggs and honey are obtained locally and furnishings are from local thrift stores. If you eat in, you get a mug; if you take out, you get compostable cups with reusable cup sleeves. Composting cuts waste to minimal amounts. Added to all this is their support of local groups, artists and musicians.

ECO recognized 13 additional green businesses actively promoting sustainability in their practices. Please patronize businesses displaying the green business emblem designed by Stephanie Lowder (see it on page 5). They include: Advanced Thermal Solutions, Blue Note, Dancing Bear Toys, Green River Preserve, HPC Printing & Mailing, Jongo Java, Mast General Store, Mountain Deli, Pardee Hospital, Slick Rock Country Emporium, Square 1 Bistro, Underground Baking Company, Waverly Inn, and West First Wood Fired Pizza

To receive recognition, these locally owned businesses completed the Environmental Stewardship Award Scorecard and identified their actions in six areas which included *Procurement of Goods, Sales and Service, Utilities/Building/Equipment/Supplies, Employees Benefits, Minimize Waste, & Community Support.*

ECO's Green Business Challenge's goal is to get over 1000 people to sign up to shop at locally-owned businesses who have taken some significant green steps. We have made some solid progress and need your help to collect more pledges. Our workshops have been so popular that many have sold out. We're planning new workshops now; so tell us the kind of workshops you'd like to see. ■

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

What Will Be Left After Austerity Hysteria?

By David Weintraub



A firestorm of anti-regulatory fervor is the newest way to fix every level of government under the mantra, "regulations cost

jobs, weaken businesses and destroy our way of life." Repeat, spin, rinse until its almost impossible to refute.

Of course, the reality tells a somewhat different story. A recent Office of Management and Budget analysis of environmental regulations from 1999 to 2009 estimated that the cost of federal environmental regulations was between \$25.8 billion to \$29.2 billion against estimated benefits ranging from \$81.9 billion to \$533 billion.

In North Carolina, one can evaluate environmental regulations against not only their financial cost, but the cost to human health. A few examples:

According to a study by the Asheville Citizen-Times, over the last decade, 534 WNC landslides and debris flows have killed six people and destroyed 40 buildings. Over the last 20 years, the study found, slides accounted for \$13.4 million in property damage. Yet the NC General Assem-

bly chose to shut down the Landslide Mapping Department because, according to Senator Rouzer, the unit has been used for "political purposes" namely to institute local regulations that protect against landslides and mudslides.

North Carolina instituted toxic air pollution standards before the federal Clean Air Act did, and our approach and standards are superior, in that they address the health risks to people nearby, while the federal program is based on technological standards that do not address health risks. However the legislature's proposal would prevent the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) from enforcing regulations higher than federal standards, which will worsen air pollution with the concomitant disease and deaths related to toxic pollutants.

All told, NC environmental programs will be cut by approximately \$23 million, resulting in the loss of more than 150 positions, which adds up to approximately 35% in cuts since its 2009 budget.

Increasingly it's becoming clear that we, the people, are the only watchdogs left. It's time for us to pick up the mantle and run with it. ■

ECO Benefit Concert starring Scott Ainslie

One of the most wonderful efforts at building a bridge between the traditional and the contemporary that I have ever encountered.
Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange



If you have an interest in acoustic blues guitar, Delta Blues, Slide Guitar, or Piedmont & Ragtime style fingerpicking -- then you should see this master musician in concert.

Purchase a VIP pass for \$30 to get in the door early (5:30) to claim the best seats and enjoy a supper buffet on the deck before the concert begins at 7:00. Concert-only tickets are \$15. For reservations (required) go to eco-wnc.org or call (828) 692-0385. ■

Join ECO friends & supporters on Sunday, July 24th, for an enchanting evening at the Purple Onion Café in downtown Saluda. See award-winning performer Scott Ainslie, and help ECO remain a strong voice for our local environment at the same time!

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collecting "bugs" and documenting stream habitat to determine stream health. Despite a rainy April, eighty-six percent of the sites were rated as "Acceptable." However, this does not tell the whole story. Seven of these "Acceptable" streams exhibited a decline in the number of "bug families" (total taxa) present in the stream as compared to this time last year. Is this a trend where the macroinvertebrate communities are in decline? Is this trend related to land use? Volunteer habitat assessments indicated an increase of algae present on four sites. It is only through ongoing biomonitoring and habitat assessments that the total tale will be told.

As water quality deteriorates, these insects decline. Other macroinvertebrates such as midges (aquatic flies), aquatic worms, leaches, and sowbugs, which tolerate polluted water, take over. Fourteen percent of our sites were rated in the spring as "Unacceptable." Gash Creek, Mill Pond Creek and Mud Creek at 7th Avenue

continue to be impacted and rated as "Unacceptable."

It is important to remember that healthy streams not only bring diversity to the ecosystem but also bring revenue to the human community from summer camps, boaters, fishers, general tourism and agriculture. When troubling issues are found, who is going to help us watch trends or enforce problems affecting Henderson County streams? It is doubtful that much help will be coming from the Department

of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) given that the state is facing massive cuts in their staff this month. Since the county's erosion and sediment program also faces cuts, it's more important than ever that local communities take on stronger roles to watchdog their streams. That's what ECO's water quality program is all about: empowering communities to better protect their natural resources. To get involved with water monitoring, call us at (828) 692-0385. ■

Girl Scout Adopt-A-Stream Team Gets Recognition

The Henderson County Girl Scouts took the lead in protecting water quality in April by tromping in Wash Creek from Kanuga Street to West Allen Street and then on to the Rotary Park at the intersection of Allen and Oak streets, pulling out whatever clutters the creek and its banks. This dedicated



Adopt-A-Stream group, helped rid Wash Creek of batteries and tires, among other things. For their stewardship and exemplification of good citizenship, Mayor Volk gave a "Certificate of Recognition" to this enthusiastic Adopt-A-Stream group and the Henderson County Girl Scouts. Elizabeth Adams is commended for rallying these shining examples of youth in the county.

Water Quality May Be Jeopardized by Cuts in County Erosion Program

As government officials at the state and county level draft their budgets for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, citizens have braced themselves for budget cuts across the board. Unfortunately too many of these cuts have been aimed at positions and programs that protect our environment. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners recently proposed to cut our county's Erosion Control Technician (ECT), a position that has been invaluable in maintaining our high level of water quality. Our Erosion Control program is responsible for soil erosion and sedimentation control for all areas of Henderson County, including the City of Hendersonville, Village of Flat Rock, and Towns of Laurel Park and Fletcher. Without it, the responsibil-

ity of monitoring and enforcing local and state erosion and sedimentation regulations will lie solely in the hands of state agencies, many of which are expecting heavy cuts under the recently proposed budget. In essence state regulation means no regulation.

On June 6th, the Henderson County Board of Commissioners held a meeting to discuss, among other things, the proposed budget. We were very pleased that more than half the public comments addressed the importance of keeping our ECT and the commissioners were bombarded by widespread support for protecting the program. As a result, the commissioners back-pedaled and pledged to protect the program, but at a reduced level. This reduction will make it hard

to stay on top of all of the abandoned and neglected developments, not to mention, new issues. 303 complaints were investigated between October 2007 and January 2009 and many residents have reaped substantial benefits from getting professional, timely service. It's vital that residents keep pressure on commissioners so they realize how vital clean water is to our economy, our environment and our public health. ■

Monitor Our Policymakers!

The Henderson County Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 pm and the third Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am at the Historic Courthouse on Main Street. Stay involved by attending and letting your voice be heard.

A BUSY RECYCLING COMMITTEE!



ECO's Recycling Committee has been busy this Spring. It was a beautiful day in April for an Earth Day celebration at Blue Ridge Community College. Our recycling display informed attendees of the county's truckload composter sale at Jackson Park on April 30th, and other how-to information. We were asked by the Boyd BBQ festival to help them reduce their waste because they realize it is NOT OK to have a big party on the back of the environment.

ECO has representation on the city's Environmental & Sustainability Board, and are still lobbying for permanent recycling bins to be installed on Main St. We have met with the County's Assistant Engineer to discuss issues of concern. She stated that the county is committed to waste reduction and would like to see a 20% reduction goal met.

The county promises to ramp up their recycling marketing campaign as soon as the new convenience center and the materials recovery facility (MRF) is up and running. American Recycling Co. anticipates the opening of its local (MRF) sometime this summer. We will let you know as soon as we know something.

Most of us can see that construction from the transfer station overhaul is squeezing current services and causing

things to move around. For example, the waste haulers are now dumping single stream recycling into one of the tipping bays, and electronics recycling has moved up to the convenience center. There have also been more inspection visits from the state because of construction.

Join ECO's Recycling committee on the second Tuesday of each month at their new time, 4:00 (1/2 hour earlier than past meetings). Stay informed about current happenings, and help plan new reduce/reuse activities. Coming soon: a new composting ECO-tour and a waste-reduc-



Attendees line up for their worm bins at the ECO's Composting Bonanza in the spring.

tion forum. Don't miss the committee's June display in the main library's glass case. ■

Waste Reduction and Reuse - the first 2 of the 3Rs:

Reduce Reuse Recycle. Anyone wishing to participate in this new, more education-based focus can join the Recycling Committee at their regular meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 4:00.

IS FRACKING IN OUR FUTURE?

The North Carolina General Assembly recently passed a bill that moves the state closer to allowing hydraulic fracturing or "fracking." Currently the practice is banned. The measure calls for a study to be completed by May 1, 2012 to determine whether the controversial method of extracting natural gas from shale would be environmentally safe in North Carolina.

Fracking blasts water, sand and hazardous chemicals into the ground at high pressure to crack open shale and extract natural gas. It can contaminate ground water, deplete water supplies, lead to flammable faucet water and leave polluted waste water in its wake. Last month in Pennsylvania a fracking well exploded, spewing thousands of gallons of chemical-laden liquid into a creek.

A recent study by Duke University shows that wells close to active fracking operations in Pennsylvania and New York are contaminated with methane—and sev-

eral lines of evidence say that it's actually from the deep shales being fracked, NOT from shallower biologically produced methane. The closer the wells are to the active fracking location, the more likely the contamination is to be at hazardous—even flammable—levels.

According to Hope Taylor, director of Clean Water

for North Carolina, "We're concerned about toxic air releases, drinking water contamination and contaminated ground water supplies for tens of thousands of folks depending on private wells" in the area where fracking is being considered. "These folks could suddenly find themselves faced with the kind of well contamination that has been reported many times in several states."

"I think the experience that other states have had should cause great concern," said Elizabeth Outzs, state director of Environment North Carolina. ■

Source: *Clean Water for North Carolina*



A fracking boom used to extract natural gas through shale.



Did You Know?

Include clean dry ziplock and bread bags in with your grocery store's plastic bag recycling program.

Support Local Green Business Where You See This Emblem



SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL GREEN BUSINESS

Jongo Java has a Heart of Green

Daniel, Jamie, and Kevin at Jongo Java are the first ever recipients of Hendersonville's **Environmental Stewardship Award**. A visit to their cozy, friendly, art-filled meeting place is a must! Enjoy their coffees, espressos, wraps, soups, and scones, among other home-made culinary delights.

Daniel expressed their deep-felt gratitude for the support from the Hendersonville community. "Our friendships with our patrons and our friendships with other local businesses we support is what sustains us. We've made the choice to secure our supplies and food ingredients from

local sources." "Local produce has such wonderful natural color and flavor that you just can't get elsewhere. We provide this goodness for our patrons. They buy from us. We buy from local producers. We share ideas, materials, and services with our neighboring businesses."



Daniel Smith, co-owner of Jongo Java removes freshly made scones from the oven.

"That's the kind of business environment we want to be a part of. It also makes for a stronger, more resilient local economy." Show your support for the Green-minded folks at Jongo Java at 117 S. Main St., Hendersonville.

Family Friendly Whitewater Adventures

GREEN RIVER ADVENTURES

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www.greenriveradventures.com

ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July-September 2011

Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month, 12:30 - 2:00 pm. Committee meetings are as follows:

Recycling Committee: 2nd Tuesday, 4:00 pm ♦ **Water Quality Committee:** 2nd Wednesday, 4:30 pm
Energy Committee: 2nd Thursday, 4:00 pm ♦ **Green Infrastructure Committee:** 3rd Thursday, 4:00 pm
 All meetings are held at the ECO office: 121 Third Ave West, Hendersonville. Visitors are welcome.

JULY

Thu. 21 **Hendersonville Green Drinks.** 6 pm at Southern Appalachian Brewery on Locust Street, Hendersonville. Lively, informal monthly sessions! Meet local people interested in or working for "green" initiatives in the region

Sun. 24 **Benefit Concert for ECO.** 7 pm. Guitarist Extraordinaire Scott Ainslie performs at The Purple Onion in Saluda with a VIP Buffet set for 5:30 pm. Enjoy a wonderful Sunday evening's entertainment while helping ECO continue its important work! Space limited - Reservations: 828-692-0385 or visit www.eco-wnc.org

Tues. 26 **Whizzabout and Ultralight Personal Transportation Vehicles.** 6:30 pm. This workshop, taught by Bob Wilson, will focus on four-wheel ultralight vehicles for personal transportation including the history of ultralight vehicles, features and functions, and a primer on how the Whizzabout was built. Pre-registration required \$15 reg fee. *ECO Conference Room*



AUGUST



Sat. 13 **Guided Bird Walk.** 8 am. Hendersonville. Co-sponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club, *Jackson Park, Hville*

Thurs. 18 **ECO Open House.** 4 - 6 p.m. Stop by our office for light refreshments and an informal visit with staff and board members, see our latest film and get updated on ECO's current work.

Thurs. 18 **Hendersonville Green Drinks.** 6 pm at Southern Appalachian Brewery on Locust Street, Hendersonville. Lively, informal monthly sessions!

Sat. 20 **4th Annual Green Home Tour.** 10-4. Tour the best of green and sustainable homes and commercial buildings in WNC that work with nature and have a gentle impact on human health and the environment. Purchase tickets online at www.eco-wnc.org, the ECO Office or regional Visitor's Centers.

SEPTEMBER

Sun. 11 **ECO Whitewater Kayaking Day.** Green River Adventures partners with ECO to offer great kayak trips on the exciting Green River, near Saluda. Trips offer family fun as well as levels for more experienced rafters. All proceeds benefit ECO. Visit www.eco-wnc.org for schedule, prices, info and reservations.

Sat. 24 **Big Sweep Community Stream Cleanup Day.** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Teams and individuals clean streams across WNC. ECO coordinates this statewide effort in Henderson County. Call ECO to join a team!

MORE UPCOMING ... Environmental FilmFest • Annual Meeting • Enviro concert • more

Join Us!



BECOME AN ECO SUSTAINER and help us establish a solid foundation for the future.

Monthly \$ _____
 Quarterly \$ _____
 Annually \$ _____

Please check your category of membership:

Corporate \$ _____	Maple _____ \$65
Chestnut _____ \$500 or more	Hemlock _____ \$40
Sycamore _____ \$250	Oak _____ \$25
Dogwood _____ \$100	Redbud(student) _____ \$10

Please contact me about special funding opportunities

Phone number _____ (day) _____ (night)

Name _____ email _____

Address _____

Clip and mail with your check to: **ECO, 121 Third Avenue West, Suite 4, Hendersonville, NC 28792 (828) 692-0385 or join online at www.eco-wnc.org**

Landslide Mapping Completed for Henderson County

With the recent release of the Slope Movement Hazard Maps for Henderson County, completed by the North Carolina Geological Survey, homeowners, landowners, developers, and real estate agents now have a crucial resource needed to protect the public from landslides. The landslide hazard program, created in response to landslides as a result of Hurricanes Francis and Ivan, is intended to provide local governments and emergency agencies with the location of areas where slope movement is most likely to occur as a result of heavy rainfall.

During Frances and Ivan in 2004, hundreds of mudslides were unleashed with the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources documenting 400 landslides, five fatalities and 27 homes destroyed in the storms. In Henderson County, a section of mountainside gave way, taking a road with it in Bear Rock Mountain Estates in Crab Creek.

The three maps produced for Henderson County indicate where

landslides have occurred, where they are likely to occur, and which down slope areas are at risk from potential landslides. The maps show that 72% of slope movement occurs on modified slopes, i.e. slopes where development has taken place, versus 28% on unmodified slopes.

In Henderson County, most of the slope movement has historically occurred on mountains containing 40% slope or more. The maps also demonstrate that 6.25% of the county is in the upper thresholds of instability meaning that the probability of instability is over 50%, which calls out for better guidance for building on steep slopes.

With the recent budget cuts, the landslide mapping unit is expected to be defunded, leaving a large vacuum of information for counties wanting to take proactive steps to protect people and natural resources.

ECO expects to hold a forthcoming forum to educate the public on what these maps are telling us. ■

A Second Look at Logging

As trees continue to come tumbling down throughout Henderson County and the region, a growing call for better logging regulations is reaching a fever pitch. At ECO's recent forum on logging in May, residents heard from forest ecologist Bob Gale, forestry historian Rob Messick and natural heritage project coordinator Ed Schwartzman on the consequences of 2000 acres being cut in the last two years and its effect on ecosystems, on rare and endangered plants and on watersheds.

ECO launched a petition drive to urge NC legislators to empower counties and municipalities to regulate logging operations. Currently under NC State law, timbering need not follow village, municipal, or county laws on tree protections.

ECO's campaign goal includes collecting 2,000 signatures for its petition drive to urge Raleigh to give better local control to communities. To sign up, find the petition on ECO's website at www.eco-wnc.org.

The next step in the campaign is to urge local communities to adopt resolutions in support of allowing their community the power to regulate logging within their jurisdiction. If you are interested in getting involved and live in Flat Rock, Laurel Park and the city of Hendersonville, please contact ECO about how you can get involved in the logging campaign. ■

Are You Passionate About the Environment?

Want to Make A Difference?

Become An ECO Volunteer!

No experience necessary.

Call us today 692-0385



**THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND
CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION**
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Benefit for ECO, your voice for the local environment



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