



ecoVoice

Environmental and Conservation Organization ♦ www.eco-wnc.org ♦ 828-692-0385 ♦ October-December 2011
"Working to protect WNC's natural heritage since 1987."

Film Fest Looks at Sustainability, Energy and Food

ECO's Third Annual Film Festival opens on Friday, October 14th with the Leonardo DiCaprio film, *The 11th Hour*, looking at our current global environmental landscape both in terms of the issues we must solve as well as stories and images of hope to create a sustainable future. The second film on Friday night is *Burning the Future: Coal in America*. Burning challenges the idea of "clean coal" by showing the devastating effects of mountaintop removal coal mining on West Virginia residents, as well as their struggles with large coal companies. The films will be followed with a panel discussion and audience participation.

Environmental Film Festival Tickets on Sale!

Hendersonville Little Theatre, State St.
Fri, Oct 14th, 6:30 pm, Sat, Oct 15th, 7 pm
Order online: www.eco-wnc.org

Saturday night's films include *Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home*, which looks at household waste and how it impacts our local environment and our planet. The film documents a family that pledges to throw nothing away for three months and learns about the journey of their waste and its consequences on our planet. The festival wraps up with *Fresh*, casting a critical eye on our food system and how it becomes sustainable. A panel follows. Great food and snacks will be available. All films will be shown Friday and Saturday evenings. ■

Environmentalism in Hard Times Keeping the Eye on the Local Prize

The North Carolina legislature just completed its worst anti-environmental term in state history, damaging the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with major cuts, shutting down the landslide mapping unit and virtually eliminating DENR's rulemaking authority. Meanwhile in Washington, presidential candidates are falling over themselves to see who will cut the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and environmental regs first. Finally, our "green" president has just blocked the government's long-awaited clean air rules which would reduce lethal ground level ozone. So why be optimistic about environmental protection going forward?

First, its important to understand that there is no contradiction between protecting our natural resources and protecting jobs. Otherwise the human race would need to concede that committing suicide by destroying the environment is the only way to make a profit. In reality, studies that have looked at employment statistics in states

with strong environmental regulations have shown that these states tend to have higher economic performance

and lower business failures. Many of the studies concluded that environmental deregulation has no economic benefits. To be sure, the U.S. auto industry did not collapse

as a result of the Clean Air Act, recycling has not thrown hundreds of thousands of people working in the plastic, paper, glass, and bottling industries out of work, and logging in the Pacific Northwest has not ceased to exist despite the listing of the Spotted Owl as an endangered species.

In fact, the opposite question could be asked. Are existing environmental regulations giving business an environmental subsidy that they

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Green Home Tour a Sell-out This Year



With over 130 tickets sold by Friday afternoon, the Fourth Green Home Tour was declared a sellout. This year, sites were chosen to showcase not only green technology, but to emphasize sustainable living practices as well. The event on Saturday, August 20 attracted about 100 people to each of the seven sites and kept the 26 volunteers busy.

The Hickory Nut Forest Community has the goal of creating a “net zero energy community.” The Laughing Waters Eco-Community Center sits on the grounds of a 19th century gristmill and the adjacent community garden reclaimed an abandoned orchard. Four workshops were held at the center on topics ranging from raising chickens and mushrooms to green building.

The tour included two homes in the Hickory Nut Community constructed largely with lumber harvested from the site, including attractive bark siding. A living roof will be installed on the roof of one garage and will provide edible food and medicinal herbs for the family year-round.

When talking about leaving a small footprint, what better way than to build small – a cozy 1,080 square feet. Outside front and back yards were permaculture gardens with local and edible plants as well as some medicinal herbs. Two additional homes on the tour also featured edible gardens.

People were lined up at the door to get a look at the LEED certified Hill-andale Elementary School. The school actively recycles and best of all encourages students, staff, and the community to become active stewards of our environment.

Interns Drew Merritt and Sam Fontaine worked through the summer to organize the tour. The event was sponsored by Surya Biofertilizers, Hendersonville Homebuilders, Wild Birds Unlimited, GreenBy3 and Whole Log Lumber. ■

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Building a Solid Foundation for the Future

By David Weintraub



Nature always helps guide reflection when memory fails to serve. As the summer's heat gives way to cooler mornings and evenings and the forest puts on a brightly colored dress rehearsal for coming winter, we cannot help but look back on the year and evaluate our successes and challenges.

How was the harvest this year? What flourished and offered a bumper crop, what was attacked by blight or bugs and what have we learned? What were we able to share with friends and neighbors, and what did we count on receiving from others?

ECO had a harvest of successful workshops, events and programs all year long. We sold out many of our events that focused on closer connections to our planet, our earth and creating a more sustainable lifestyle. Folks wanted to know more about composting, permaculture, low cost solar and windpower and how to leave a smaller footprint without spending a lot of money.

And ECO learned that without

having a more sustainable source of funding, we spent more of our time trying to keep our doors open and less on working to protect our threatened habitats and keeping our watersheds clean and pristine.

What also became perfectly clear is that ECO cannot continue to serve without a larger staff dedicated to education and advocating for natural heritage protection. So the board and staff agreed that launching a sustainer campaign and offering electronic fund transfers was a critical step forward in greater a foundation for ECO's future.

ECO launched a sustainer campaign this summer with the goal of raising \$50,000 in sustainer funds, funds that are donated each year by our members and supporters. We hope to hire an outreach coordinator in 2012 that will allow us to reach younger generations, collaborate with willing partners and expand the scope and breadth of our work.

Please consider making your membership dues part of our sustainer campaign and also consider a larger gift to support our mountaintop campaign to help ECO to grow to better protect the beautiful mountains that we love.

Thank you in advance! ■

Introducing Rachel Hodge, ECO's Water Quality Administrator

ECO's new Water Quality Administrator and AmeriCorps Project Conserve Member is Rachel Hodge.

Rachel hails from Savannah, Georgia, where she grew up playing in the waves of the Atlantic Ocean off Tybee Island. She attended Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, GA, where she earned a B.S. in Environmental Science. While at GCSU, Rachel participated in field classes in Georgia, Tennessee, several western states, the Bahamas, and Belize.



Following her environmental passions after college, she worked as an environmental educator at the North Carolina

Aquarium on Roanoke Island in the Outer Banks. In April 2011, she completed her Master of Science degree in Planning with a concentration in Environmental Planning and Natural Resources Management. at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL. She

worked at the Northwest Florida Water Management District gaining important practical experience in watershed protection work. ■

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT THROUGH ADOPT-A-STREAM

An integral part of ECO's water quality activities is our Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) program, operated jointly with the Mud Creek Watershed Restoration Project. By joining the program, volunteers assume the role of stream stewards, performing regular stream monitoring and assessment along with clean-ups as needed. By these relatively simple activities we are able to spot problems quickly, before they become serious, and can work with local authorities to deal with them. Our volunteers play a valuable role in this process.

Given that many agencies traditionally charged to be water quality watchdogs are disappearing due to budget cutbacks on the federal, state

and local level, the Adopt-A-Stream program has become more impor-



tant than ever. The more that local communities get involved in stream stewardship, the more likely our most precious resource will be here for generations to come.

No special qualifications are necessary since ECO provides AAS

training. All that's needed is a desire to make a difference to protect our natural resources. Community and homeowners groups, churches, businesses, schools, camps, scout and civic groups make up the program, and find it a great way to get out with other interested folks to make a valuable contribution to preserving our local waterways.

For more information on joining Adopt-A-Stream, call the ECO office to set up a meeting with the program coordinator. More information is also available online at www.eco-wnc.org. ECO is currently looking for an assistant administrator for the Adopt-A-stream program. If you're interested, call us at 692-0385. ■

HARD TIMES, *continued from page 1*

haven't paid for? If one company returns polluted water into receiving waterways and another company's coal-fired powerplant pollutes the air and water with mercury, and both are not responsible for the pollution they have caused, nor the diseases that result (cancer, emphysema, learning disabilities in children, etc), are they receiving a premium for their lack of liability for damage to the commons? Put another way, if businesses who impact the environment were liable for the damages they cause, wouldn't they change the way they do business? Would the cost to society in terms of healthcare, remediation of air and water be reduced so that government can focus its energies and funds on building parks, preserving open space, and providing a higher quality education to our children?

Recalibrating the environmental dialog to a broader notion of cost and benefit is critical for our future. In the meantime, grassroots environmental organizations like ECO have to assume greater responsibility for changing the local conservation and becoming greater watchdogs. The baton has been passed and our job is to bring the

benefits of natural resource protection to the community level.

So what's the good news? ECO plans a campaign to go back to communities where water quality monitoring is occurring to work with community leaders to get them more engaged in protecting the streams where they fish, swim, and boat. The culture of many communities is strongly tied to waterways. Connecting culture with natural heritage protection is the key. The goal is to develop a greater ownership of environmental resources by those who have the most to gain when they are protected and the most to lose when they fail.

Likewise, we will promote good examples of natural heritage protection wherever we see it. For instance, the City of Hendersonville has done a tremendous job building and expanding city greenways, implementing stormwater plans for Brittain Creek and restoring Wash Creek.

One of the largest agricultural concerns in Henderson County, Van Wingerdan International, is currently constructing a major stormwater project that will connect nearly 30 acres of rooftop and parking lots to an

artificial wetland which will prevent greenhouse production waste and stormwater runoff from pouring into the Mills River. A similar collaborative effort between local Mills River farmers, ECO, Soil and Water Conservation and many others is developing into a long-range effort to protect the county's main source of drinking water from agricultural and development runoff by creating a sustainable source of funds that can help farmers install best management practices.

There are many positive local stories amidst the not-so-positive news on the state and federal level. Our job is to act locally in a way that connects people to the benefits of protecting our natural heritage and by demonstrating that being green begets green, by bringing in needed revenues that pay for our schools, our infrastructure and our social services. People continue to come here to fish in our streams, eat from our farmstands and hike our mountains. They wouldn't come here if they thought we were going to let our ecosystems decay and degrade.

Please consider joining ECO's Water Quality Committee and get involved! ■

Recycling ECO-Tour A Success



As a follow-up to the Spring Composting Bonanza, the ECO Recycling Committee hosted an ECO-tour on August 17th.

Participants visited 3 commercial sites in the area that showed the complete composting loop: farm-to-table-to-farm. Park Ridge Health's Nutrition Department has made a commitment to using locally sourced food in their kitchen, and also contracts with Danny's Dumpster to remove their food-waste for composting. The group also witnessed Danny's large-scale composting operation (permitted by the state) at Crowell Farm, where food waste is composted along with wood chips and



Sunny Point general manager Brigett Bolding shows the ECO-tour around the cafe's garden.

cow manure to yield a beautiful, rich soil amendment. Next, the tour visited the garden behind Sunnypoint Café in West Asheville. Not only does the café isolate food waste for Danny's Dumpster pick-ups, they also utilize the compost produced at Crowell Farm in growing food for the restaurant. Of the 65 businesses that Danny services for trash and recycling, 43 have him pick up their food waste for composting. To learn more visit Danny's website: dannysdumpster.com

ECO to host Waste Reduction Forum

Please join us for a Waste Reduction Forum on Tuesday, November 8, at 7:00 pm at the City Operations Center (305 Williams St). Learn how we can all reduce our waste, and how the City and County intend to support their citizens in an effort to generate

less waste.

Included in the panel of experts will be Marcus Jones, county engineer, who will speak about the new transfer station components, and how the county foresees reducing its future waste by 20%. Mayor Barbara Volk will speak about the city's changeover to collecting its own recycling, it's new Main Street recycling bins, and future plans. Stan Kumor, chair of the

Solid Waste Advisory Committee, will share his family's waste reduction study that showed a 70% waste reduction by just utilizing the current available services. The 4th panelist, Ron Moore with American Recycling Inc., will speak about their new regional

material recovery facility (MRF), and what it will do to help with local waste reduction. If you have questions regarding waste and recycling in our area, now is the time to ask them! ■

Sign Up to Shop Green

Local businesses taking meaningful steps toward working greener are recognized by ECO and display a Green Business Emblem. Sign the pledge on ECO's website (eco-wnc.org) to patronize these firms. Customers who shop green encourage more businesses to go green and together, we make Henderson County a healthier place to live!

ENERGY USE PLUMMET

Americans are apparently getting smarter about energy as their pocketbooks get lighter. From 1980 to 2000, residential power demand grew by about 2.5 percent a year. From 2000 to 2010, the growth rate slowed to 2 percent. Over the next 10 years, demand is expected to decline by about 0.5 percent a year, according to the Electric Power Research Institute, a nonprofit group funded by the utility industry.

Certainly some of that decrease can be attributed to energy efficiency measures taken by homeowners from installing EnergyStar appliances to insulating homes and taking advantage of green energy alternatives. But in the first quarter of 2011, energy use fell 1.3% nationwide, which apparently surprised many power companies executives. The same trend has been found in gasoline use, although utility use generally doesn't track economic changes quite as closely as car use.

"No one knows if it's customer concern about the economy or a structural change," says Bill Johnson, CEO of Progress Energy,



Did You Know?

Mixed paper recycling includes: newspapers, junk mail, phone books, magazines, catalogs, food boxes, paper egg cartons, & sticky notes

TS WITH ECONOMY

which serves Florida and the Carolinas.

Given that peak power plants such as the coal fired powerplant at Cliffside were proposed on the premise that energy usage would continue to rise, we asked Duke Power if there was still a need to construct Cliffside and new nuclear powerplants.



According to Jason Walls, spokesperson for Duke Power, there are no plans to slow down construction of their peak plants. Walls says, "Our studies indicate there is an overwhelming need for construction of Cliffside and nuclear powerplants."

However, Ulla Reeves of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy believes that greater conservation measures and more incentives for green energy could easily replace dirty energy plants. Richard Freud- enberger, energy expert and Back Home magazine publisher agrees. "Clean energy is being produced by hydropower in the Northwest and windpower in the Northeast. We could be buying this green power rather than building more coal-fired powerplants. However, it's simply more profitable for shareholders to build more plants." ■

Support Local Green Business Where You See This Emblem



SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL GREEN BUSINESS

Printing With An Attitude

HPC has an attitude of stewardship for the environment and of empowerment to make a difference. That's the atmosphere that Bob Diehl fosters at HPC Printing and Mailing. "We've challenged our employees to think of smarter, cleaner, greener ways to do business.



Their great ideas have led us to do some impressive new things."

Some examples include: 1) Using a type of toner that improves recyclability of material through a cleaner method. 2) Using biodegradable

trash bags. 3) Using new shop towels that are biodegradable, made from material that used to be thrown away, and that extends the life of the printer rollers. 4) Switching to more efficient lighting that cuts lighting energy use in half. 5) A decision to never use virgin paper. All paper they use contains a minimum of 10% and up to 100% recycled fiber.

HPC also uses soy-based ink without petroleum exclusively in all their printing jobs.

You can find HPC Printing and Mailing at 103 Michelle Dr. off Four Seasons Blvd. Call them at 828-697-9742. ■

photo courtesy Rob Travis

ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October-December 2011

Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month, 12:00 - 1:30 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 pm ♦ **Green Infrastructure Committee:** 3rd Thursday, 4pm

All meetings are held at the ECO office. Visitors and volunteers are welcome.

OCTOBER - *Biomonitoring Month PROTECT OUR STREAMS!*

Sat. 8 **Guided Bird Walk.** 9 am, Jackson Park, Hendersonville.
Co-sponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.

Fri/Sat 14-15 **3rd Annual Environmental Film Festival.** Friday 6:30 pm,
Saturday 7:00 pm, Great films, good panel discussions, refreshments and food. Hendersonville Little Theater.

Sat. 15 **Global Transformation Festival.** 10-6 A day of celebration, featuring actions people can do NOW to plant seeds and lay the foundation for a sustainable world. Hickory Nut Forest Eco-Community. For more info: www.HickoryNutForest.com

Sat. 29 **ECO Annual Meeting for Members and Friends.** 1 pm Hike, 2 pm Meeting. Join us for a lively annual meeting to discuss ECO's accomplishments and plans, and the election of ECO's 2011 Board of Directors. Refreshments will be served. Camp Green Cove, Zirconia. RSVP 692-0385.



NOVEMBER

Tues. 8 **Waste Reduction Forum.** 7 pm. Learn how we can all waste less, and how the City and County intend to support their citizens in an effort to generate less waste. City Operations Center, 305 Williams St, downtown Hendersonville.



Sat. 12 **Guided Bird Walk.** 9 am, Jackson Park, Hendersonville. Cosponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.

Tues. 15 **Low-Cost Wind Power Workshop.** 6:30 p.m. Learn how to build your own small-scale wind power device under the masterful instruction of local expert and Back Home magazine publisher, Richard Freudenberger. Pre-registration required. \$15.

DECEMBER

Sat. 10 **Guided Bird Walk.** 9 am, Jackson Park, Hendersonville. Cosponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.

Thu. 15 **Hendersonville Green Drinks.** 6-8 pm, Lively, informal monthly sessions! Meet local people interested in or working for "green" initiatives in the region. Southern Appalachian Brewery, 7th Ave, Hville.

Thu. 22 **A Winter Solstice Night Hike.** 7-9 p.m. DuPont State Forest. Celebrate the darkness of the longest night and quietly welcome the sun as it begins its journey toward the northern hemisphere. Weather permitting, we'll stroll together to Hooker Falls in DuPont State Forest on a 1/4-mile moderate trail. Bring flashlights and a warm drink to toast the Winter Solstice. Call for directions/reservations 692-0385.

MORE TO COME ... Christmas Tree Recycling, Heritage Apple Tree Sales and 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 or leaving a legacy to ECO

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**

Green Infrastructure Committee to Tackle Proactive Environmental Policies

The Green Infrastructure Committee, ECO's environmental policy body, has set its priorities for 2012. Its focus will be: 1) implementing true steep slopes rules that protect watersheds and homeowners; 2) dealing with abandoned development and taking action to restore and remediate watersheds damaged by neglect; 3) a logging regulation campaign which will advocate to allow municipalities to set their own logging rules that work for their unique communities; and 4) increased watershed protection work to involve local communities in taking greater ownership of their streams in conjunction with the water quality committee.

ECO recently met with the Southern Environmental Law Center to get their assistance on some

of ECO's policy concerns. According to David Weintraub, ECO's Executive Director, getting the county more engaged in abandoned development is an important priority. The Seven Falls development has a \$6 million performance bond that the county will have access to, but the county plans to use it to put in roads and sewers for a development that will likely never be built. "This money could better be spent restoring damaged streambanks and buffers and remediating deteriorating water quality rather than putting infrastructure into a ghost town," Weintraub said.

The Committee is also exploring whether to join a lawsuit to enforce DENR's classification of Boylston Creek which was thwarted by recent legislative action. ■

ECO Teams Up with Hendersonville Co-op

The Hendersonville Community Co-op offers co-op owners the opportunity to earn a discount by volunteering with ECO. To do this, please contact ECO to schedule your time availability.

All you need to do is file the paperwork on ECO letterhead, or one of the co-op's sheets from their kiosk and turn in your forms to the Co-op suggestion box by the end of the month so that your hours can be logged in the computer system for a discount the following month.

Volunteering 4 hours a month will earn a 5 % discount. Volunteering 8 hours is worth a 10 % discount. Volunteer time that exceeds 8 hours will be carried over to the following month. Up to 4 hours may be carried over but hours will expire at the end of that following month. Hours are totaled at the end of each month and applied as a discount for the following month. For more information about this benefit to ECO volunteers and coop owners, contact the co-op admin office at 693-8557 with your questions. This is a great way to support community wellness, your local co-op and the environment.

For more info about becoming a Hendersonville Community Co-op owner, call 693-0505. To sign up to volunteer with ECO, call us at 692-0385. ■

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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ECO Officers and Directors

President: Jeri Peterson
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Executive Director: David Weintraub
Administrative Assistant: Susan Harris

Water Quality Administrator: Rachel Hodge
ECO VOICE Editor: David Weintraub

ECO Voice cover photo by RobTravis.com.
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Help ECO reach the next mountaintop!

Join our Mountaintop Fund Campaign today!

ECO has launched major initiatives to make sure our land-use regulations protect sensitive habits, our waterways remain pristine and recycling becomes a county-wide practice. (Isn't it about time?) Pledge your support today so ECO can reach new heights!

Total Pledge Amount

- Mount Mitchell \$10,000
- Mount Pisgah \$ 5,000
- Pinnacle Mountain \$ 1,000
- Bearwallow Mountain \$ 500
- Sugarloaf Mountain \$ 250
- Stone Mountain \$ 100
- Name Your Mountain \$

Pledge Frequency

- Lump sum Annually Quarterly
- Enclosed is a first gift of \$ _____ Begin installments on: _____
- Enclosed is a single gift of \$ _____

Yes! I want to protect WNC's natural heritage!

Name: _____ Company: _____

Address: _____

Evening phone: _____ Daytime phone: _____

In Honor/Memory of: _____

Mail to: ECO, 121 Third Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC 28792 • Or donate online: www.ECO-WNC.org