



ecoVoice

Environmental and Conservation Organization ♦ www.eco-wnc.org ♦ 828-692-0385 ♦ January-March 2012
“Working to protect WNC’s natural heritage since 1987.”

Heritage Tree Sale Includes American Hybrid Chestnuts

Many people buy heritage fruit and nut trees to connect to the cultural history of Western North Carolina that is being rapidly obliterated by development and the globalization of food. Chestnuts were the keystone tree in the Southern Appalachians, a source of food, lumber, stream protection and habitat.

Heritage Apples, Peaches and Chestnuts Now Available!

Order Online now at
www.eco-wnc.org

Pickup of Trees is on February 11th
Hendersonville Visitor’s Center

A chestnut tree was discovered in the 1950s by Dr. Robert Dunstan in a stand of dead and dying chestnuts that had been decimated by the blight. When he inoculated the tree with active blight spores, the tree showed no sign of disease. He cross-pollinated the American graft with some Chinese chestnut grafts and produced a chestnut that was disease resistant and showed many traits of the American chestnut. Bring a heritage tree like an old timey apple or chestnut into your yard by purchasing a tree today.

You can order Dunstan chestnuts, along with heritage apples, peaches, blueberries and persimmons during ECO’s heritage tree sale. Many varieties are extremely limited so purchasing early guarantees you won’t miss out. They make great gifts or an addition to your garden. Order at eco-wnc.org and enjoy the fruits of your labor! ■

What is the State of Our Streams?

by Rachel Hodge

Western North Carolina is fortunate to be covered by miles and miles of beautiful freshwater streams and rivers. They are places of childhood memories- vacations during hot southern summers filled with trout fishing, swimming, and boating. Many people who have come here in search of post-career shifts in a peaceful mountain area have settled down for a new life. The region is famous for visitors to experience the natural wonders that many of us live among day-by-day. Understanding the significance of these precious resources is the key to keeping them pristine, safe, and available for our enjoyment and use.

Henderson County luckily shares these natural wonders with the rest of the region. The majority of the county lies within the Upper French Broad River watershed; the major tributaries to this watershed in the County are the French Broad River, Mud Creek, Mills River, and Cane Creek. These subwatersheds are important monitoring points for water quality, especially considering the surface

water supply drawn from the North Fork of the Mills River. The remaining portions of the county lie within the Upper Broad River watershed; major

tributaries that flow through Henderson County include the Broad River, Green River, and the Hungry River.



The Upper French Broad River Watershed

Many sections of Mud Creek, the French Broad River, Cane Creek, the Mills River, and associated tributaries continue to face water quality issues that stem from both urban and agricultural development. The most common issues include highly channelized stream sections, the lack of adequate riparian buffers, habitat degradation, sedimentation, stormwater runoff, and non-point source agricultural pollution. Land use is a major factor contributing to the on-going degrada-

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Greening Our Community Sustainability Workshops for 2012

Interested in a more sustainable life style? ECO is expanding its workshop schedule to a monthly event and expanding the scope of the presentations. Check out the upcoming workshops.

Jan 26 - 6:30 pm: **Lessons Learned by Green Home Owners- What works and what doesn't**

The owners of homes on ECO's Green Home Tour will present a forum describing their experience. Come learn what features worked up to expectations and where they encountered problems.

February 21 - 6:30 pm: **Raising Rabbits for the Home or Business**

Learn to raise rabbits, from breeding stock, housing, feeding, breeding, processing, packaging and sales. *Harty Farm*

March 6 - 6:30 pm: **Creating a Neighborhood Orchard**

Building your orchard in your backyard or in your neighborhood. *Chuck Marsh*

April 21 - 10 am: **Wild Plant Walk**

Many native plants often thought to be "weeds" are healthier than the vegetables many gardeners plant in their gardens. Learn about our native plants on this interesting (and tasty) walk in our neighborhood. *Michele Skeele*

Green Business Recognition and Award

We had a successful green business recognition program last year and are looking forward to recognizing more businesses this year. Please help get these businesses the recognition they deserve. Our 2011 winners include: Advanced Thermal Solutions, Black Bear Café, Blue Note, Dancing Bear Toys, Green River Preserve, A Healthier Home, HPC Printing, Jongo Java, Mast General Store, Mountain Deli, Pardee Hospital, Slick Rock Country Emporium, Square 1 Bistro, Underground Baking, Waverly Inn, and West First Wood-Fired Pizza. ■

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Counting Our Blessings . . .

By David Weintraub



As difficult as this past year has been in the environmental world, there's been some good news amidst the not-so-good reports, which are worth celebrating.

Recently, Amy's Kitchen, one of the largest producers of organic foods in the country announced they were opening a plant in our region and would require organic products from local farmers. They made a point to notify the ag community that they would accept produce from farmers of all sizes. Green incentives to induce farmers out of the industrial model have been few and far between in our area, so this was very hopeful news.

I've been working more closely with the agricultural community in the last year more than I ever have and I believe there is an interest in greater stewardship so long as it doesn't undercut their already precarious financial condition. Maybe Amy's will be the organic 'enchilada' that sparks a transformation in our farm fields. The more we can move out of industrial farming, the better we can protect our

streams that face constant assaults from pesticide-laden runoff.

The Division of Water Quality's monitoring of local streams demonstrates that not only are active pesticides running off into critical watersheds like the Mills River, but so-called "legacy" pesticides have been found as well, including such nasties as DDT and dieldrin. These chemicals can persist in the soil for many decades, bioaccumulating in fish and human tissue.

The more incentives there are to move out of pesticide-intensive agricultural such as that being offered by Amy's and the Mills River Partnership, the better. The hope for this year is that the Partnership will finally nail down an agreement with the cities of Hendersonville and Asheville to create a self-sustaining source of funds that will fund the creation of best management practices that will prevent soil from migrating off of the fields and into our drinking water watershed.

By buying from local farmers, we encourage farmers to be more responsive to healthier practices, which is a victory for everyone: the farmworkers, the farmers, their customers and our aquatic ecosystems. ■

Christmas Tree Recycling With A Twist

Long-time members know that ECO runs a Christmas tree recycling program each year to insure that these trees do not end up in landfills, but get to live again as mulch in yards throughout the region. The event is co-sponsored by Henderson County, the City of Hendersonville and King's Hardware who offers their mulching equipment for the program.

Henderson County residents can start bringing trees to Jackson Park Parking Lot #6 starting on the day after Christmas. The mulching itself will occur on Saturday, January 7th from

9-2. Residents can bring a glad bag or a pickup truck to pick up mulch.

This year, ECO is offering a special incentive to get your tree mulched. If you would like an ECO volunteer to pickup your tree, just call ECO at (828) 692-0385 and we'll schedule a pickup between January 3 and January 7th for the nominal fee of \$15 per pickup.

All trees must be devoid of any decorations including exotic plants. The event is coordinated by ECO in cooperation with Henderson County Parks and Recreation, Hendersonville Public Works and King's Hardware. ■

Let the Celebrations Begin -- ECO's 25th Anniversary

2012 will bring many exciting possibilities and programs. One of the most exciting is ECO's 25th anniversary celebration.

ECO began as a hiking group in 1987 led by Mary Jo Padgett and David Malpass and it has since grown to become one of the most effective environmental organizations in North Carolina.

Over the years, we've built nature trails in Jackson Park and the Green River Gamelands. We've fought to establish DuPont Forest, helped found Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy and ECO has been responsible for advocating and facilitat-

ing many of the land protection rules that help protect our natural heritage.



Ribbon cutting at Jackson Park for the opening of the kiosk.

To celebrate our 25th anniversary, ECO is putting together a special **ECO Voice** issue that will include remembrances by founding members. If

you are one of them or were involved in some of our major efforts, please jot down some notes and send us your pictures and stories.

We also plan a summer anniversary concert and we are creating a Wall of Remembrance which will contain your memories, pictures and hopes for the future.

If you can help us plan our concert, put together our wall of remembrance, or write

for the anniversary newsletter, please contact ECO at (828) 692-0385 or eco@eco-wnc.org. ■

STATE OF OUR STREAMS, *continued from page 1*

tion of these subwatersheds. According to the 2011 Land Cover Data Set (USGS), 12.4% of the total watershed is developed, 69.9% is forested, 14.0% is agricultural, and 4% is described as "other." Though 12.4% does not sound like a huge amount of land spread out over 6 counties, most development in the French Broad River basin has been concentrated in the valleys near waterways (i.e.: floodplain), increasing the probability for pollution and development issues to impact the watershed on a greater, more proximate scale.

Water Quality Issues in the Upper Broad River Watershed

Similar issues also affect the quality of waters in the Upper Broad River Watershed. Habitat degradation, fecal coliform bacteria, and nutrient loading from agriculture, stormwater, and development are the main stresses on this watershed. Compromised habitat quality is most often a direct result of nearby land disturbance, leading to high turbidity, low clarity, variable temperature and pH, increased erosion, changes in substrate, and alterations to the food web. Fecal coliform bacteria is especially prevalent when untreated sewage or livestock waste enters the waterways. Excess nutrients, namely

phosphorus and nitrogen, come from fertilizer applications and can be harmful in decreasing the amount of readily dissolvable oxygen in the water. Runoff from agriculture, construction sites, and stormwater can contain detrimental amounts of nutrients and other pollutants that are unnatural to aquatic ecosystems.

The Value of Watershed Health

In order to better protect our watersheds, the importance of valuing natural resources must become top priority. This involves understanding the links between physical, chemical, and ecological components of watersheds. We should strive to uphold environmental integrity so that we can continue to have fresh water for daily use and recreation. We should emphasize the value of biological diversity for ecological balance and education. The ecosystem services that watersheds provide for society are immense in value and deserve protection so that future generations will have the same opportunities as past and present to appreciate the worth of water.

ECO's Work to Improve Watershed Quality

ECO is continuously taking steps to improve watershed health, locally and regionally. Through quarterly, monthly, and annual stream surveys and chemical, physical, and biological sampling, groups of dedicated volunteers report on the health and conditions of local waters, so data can be used to characterize long-term trends. ECO water quality volunteers educate citizens on stormwater management practices, erosion and sediment control methods, and pollution prevention measures. Programs like Adopt-A-Stream, VWIN, Biomonitoring, and Big Sweep engage citizens and community groups to be stewards of local waterways. Without the commitment of ECO's volunteers and the hard work of the Water Quality Committee, it is certain that the streams and rivers of Henderson County would be even further degraded. As a community, it's vital that we work together to educate ourselves, understand the need for local action and stewardship, and provide each other with the tools and resources to keep our watersheds safe, healthy, clean, and functioning for years to come.

To volunteer, contact ECO's water quality committee at 692-0385. ■

Hooray, New Recycling Center Opens!



The county engineer informed us that we might expect the new convenience center to open as a Merry Christmas present. Sure enough, on December 1st the gates opened to a clean, paved, well-organized recycling center. It will remain free and open to the public as an incentive for those who recycle up to 50% of their household waste. Most people would have preferred to have several sites available to drop off their trash and recyclables, but the county is only willing to finance one convenience center. at this time. The new one is centrally located.



Steve Breckheimer recycles newspapers at the County's new convenience center on opening day, December 1st.

cardboard, #1 & #2 plastics, glass, aluminum and steel for recycling. The Mayor said that city residents are now recycling 23% of their waste, and would do more if more things could be recycled. The county engineer reported that county residents could be recycling more, up to 20%, with the new convenience center opening up, the haulers collecting recycling, and better record keeping. The old BASF plant in Enka was announced as the new location of a regional material recovery facility (MRF), which will be owned and operated by American Recycling.

All of the panelists agreed that more education would help recycling numbers increase and said they were working on making more available.

New Environmental Programs Coordinator

Megan Piner was hired by Henderson County to replace Alexis Baker as the county's Environmental Program's Coordinator. Her duties include overseeing the county's recycling program, and she will be doing community outreach through educational programs. For a program or question, Megan can be reached at 694-6524 or mpiner@hendersoncountync.org. ■

Tar Sands Are Not the Answer

by John Myers

Recently I joined 12,000 people to circle the White House and ask President Obama to deny the permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline. I learned from the scientists, activists and native Americans that this pipeline will carry the dirtiest oil on the planet across the US heartland from the Canadian tar sands in Alberta. This oil is not intended to be used in the US, but will be shipped overseas to China. It will not reduce energy dependence or create lasting jobs. It will harm the environment and delay creating renewable energy jobs.



The Keystone XL has already had 13 leaks in its first year of operation.

This oil is buried deep in shale deposits and is extracted by clear-cutting the pristine northern boreal forests, the largest outside of the Amazon. This wholesale destruction of Canada's forests will greatly accelerate climate problems by releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Highly toxic chemicals are injected into the shale under high pressure to force out bitumen, a thick sludge. This uses 5 barrels of pure water for every barrel of oil.

Toxic chemicals that come to the surface are dumped in open pits where birds that land on it die. Native American communities downstream find their water full of cancer-causing chemicals.

The smaller pipeline in place now was promised to leak once in 20 years, but has already burst over 13 times in the first year! The proposed route will go over the largest pure water aquifer in the country, the Ogallala in Nebraska. A spill here would contaminate the water used by millions of people and necessary for the farming breadbasket of the country!

So what do we do? We can't wait for government or fossil fuel corporations to come up with an environmental answer. The change must start with each of us, speaking up and demanding a safer world for our children, protection of our sacred waters and forests, and exposing corruption and hidden illegal activities. Studies have proven that energy efficiency alone can cut America's energy demands by 30%.

You can learn more at tarsandsaction.org and earthjustice.org ■

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL GREEN BUSINESS

Dancing Bear Toys puts the "Recycling" in Fun

No, that's not backwards. Dancing Bear Toys in downtown Hendersonville carries a line of toys made from recycled milk jugs. Their trucks, blocks, tea sets, and boats are fun to play with, they look great, they come in packaging made from recycled paper, and they are made in the USA.

Store manager Melissa Inganamort says, "The decision to carry these products helps Dancing Bear achieve its goals of reducing landfill waste, of reducing energy consumption used in toy transport, and

of supporting our local and national economy."

There are many smart things about locally-owned Dancing Bear Toys, voted Best Toy Store in WNC four years in a row! The best part may be in knowing that a youngster you know is playing with a toy made from stuff that you



recycle! Visit Dancing Bear Toys at 418 N. Main St. Call them at 828-693-4500. ■

Forum Report

On November 8th ECO's Recycling Committee sponsored a Waste Reduction Forum in the auditorium of the City Operation's Center in downtown Hendersonville. It was designed as a way for the public to gather information on recycling from a panel of experts including County engineer Marcus Jones, Mayor Barbara Volk, SWAC chair Stan Kumor, and Ron Moore of American Recycling Inc.

Stan Kumor's 3-month waste analysis of his family showed that they recycle 68% of their waste by separating waste paper, newspapers,



Did You Know?

The new convenience center accepts electronic waste anytime they are open:
Monday - Saturday 8:00 - 4:30

Support Local Businesses Bearing This Sign



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is a proud supporter of ECO.

ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January-March 2012

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, 4 pm. All meetings at the ECO office: 121 Third Ave West, Hville. Visitors are welcome.

JANUARY

Sat 7 **Henderson County Christmas Tree Recycling.** 9 am-2 pm, Make this your seasonal gift to the earth. If you want to have your tree picked up, contact ECO: 692-0385. Co-sponsored by ECO, Henderson County, City of Hendersonville and King's Hardware. *Jackson Park, parking lot-Field 6*

Sat. 14 **Guided Bird Walk.** 9 am, Hendersonville. Co-sponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club, *Jackson Park, Hville*

Thu. 19 **Water Quality Programs Interest Meeting.** 5 pm, Learn about the many ways you can be involved with ECO's Water Quality Programs to protect the waterways of Henderson County. *Jongo Java, Hville*

Thu. 26 **Lessons Learned by Green Home Owners- What works and what doesn't.** 6:30 pm, The owners of homes on ECO's Green Home Tour will present a forum describing their experience. Come learn what features worked, what didn't and why. *ECO Conference Room*

FEBRUARY

Water Quality Master Classes. Wednesdays Feb 1-March 14th, 6 pm- 9 pm. Six week course hosted by Mud Creek Watershed Restoration Project Coordinator Diane Silver. Educates about local stream quality, management strategies and the role of government agencies, businesses, nonprofits and citizens in protecting water. \$30 materials fee. Call 697-4891 to reserve a spot. *Cooperative Extension, Jackson Pk*



Sat. 11 **Heritage Tree Sale.** 9 am-noon, Shop for old-timey apple, peach, chestnut, blueberry and other treasured fruit and nut trees to enjoy for years to come. Pre-ordered trees must be picked up between 9 am and noon. Leftover trees will be sold at noon. For a listing of available trees and to order, go online at www.eco-wnc.org or call the ECO office. *Hendersonville Visitor's Center* (weather date Feb 18th)

Tues. 21 **Sustainable Living Workshop: Raising Rabbits for the Home or Business.** 6:30 pm, Rick Harty of Harty Farms discusses everything rabbits – breeding stock to housing and feeding requirements to processing and sales. \$15 program fee. Pre-registration required. Call ECO for details: *ECO Conference room*

MARCH

Tues. 6 **Sustainable Living Workshop: Creating a Neighborhood Orchard.** 6:30 pm, Local permaculture expert Chuck Marsh discusses how to build an orchard in your backyard or in your neighborhood. \$15 program fee. Pre-registration required. Call ECO for details. *ECO Conference room*

Sat. 24 **Biomonitoring Training for Stream Monitors.** 10 am- 4 pm. Designed for new volunteers and veterans wishing to refresh their skills covering aquatic insect morphology, identification and sampling protocol. Includes lab and field work. Call to reserve your spot. *Blue Ridge Community College*

Also in March: Kids in the Creek March 3-5, 24-26, Adopt A Stream Hands On Training March 31, call for details

MORE TO COME ... Earth Day Service Day - Blue Ridge Community College April 28

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**

Flat Rock Logging Campaign

Given the growth of logging in Henderson County and the specific clear-cut on the scenic highway in Flat Rock, ECO organized a campaign to establish logging rules that balance landowner's need for revenues with our community's commitment to protecting its natural heritage. 150 residents of Flat Rock signed up to encourage the Village of Flat Rock to adopt a resolution stating that Raleigh should approve an exemption from the rule that Flat Rock cannot set its own rules concerning logging. Several representatives of the newly formed Flat Rock Tree Preservation Initiative met with Flat Rock Mayor Bob Staton and Councilman Ronald L. Davis on Friday, October 28.

The meeting was cordial, however the Mayor was concerned with getting the Village involved in a county-wide logging campaign. He said that the Village Council was working quietly behind the scenes

with state policymakers to get special legislation allowing Flat Rock to regulate tree cutting and that Flat Rock's unique historic characteristics were the key to success. ECO supports getting special legislation for Flat Rock. If the Village succeeds in getting oversight of timbering, this will set a valuable precedent for the county and beyond. Given that ECO members and supporters have urged ECO's involvement on this issue, ECO will continue to work with the village and policymakers to help foster special legislation that protects our trees.

Community involvement best ensures that our community's interest are served. It is important that ECO and members of the Flat Rock Tree Preservation Initiative continue to stay involved and to discuss what we want in a logging exemption that serves us and our ecosystem best. ■

Seven Falls UPDATE

Henderson County filed suit several months ago to get the \$6 million performance bond for Seven Falls because the development had never put in the required infrastructure. It is expected that it will be at least six months for the case to wind through the court system and the county to receive the funds. According to the County Attorney, once the County has the money, it will spend it putting in roads and other infrastructure. ECO hopes that no infrastructure is built until the damage to streams estimated at over \$1 million is corrected.

Given that the bond specifically calls for erosion and sediment controls, ECO is working with the Southern Environmental Law Center to develop strategies that enable the county to legally use the bond money for erosion control, sedimentation, and storm water management. SELC Attorney DJ Gerken suggests that the question isn't whether the bond money can be used for infrastructure, but prioritizing it. Which should come first, paving and sewers or fixing the damage done because of the developer's negligence?

Hopefully, ECO and the county can come to some amicable agreement moving forward. In the meantime, ECO is urging the county to seed the bare roadbeds immediately to prevent further damage to adjoining streams. ■

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**

121 THIRD AVENUE WEST, SUITE 4
HENDERSONVILLE, NC 28792
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ECO Voice cover photo by RobTravis.com.
Printed with soy ink on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

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