



Green Home Tour Showcasing WNC’s Finest

A “green home” has several connotations. First, it’s a home that is both energy efficient and gentle to its surrounding environment. Another is that it saves a lot of cash in the long run as energy prices become increasingly more volatile. Whichever green you are concerned about (and you can choose more than one), ECO’s Third Annual Green Home Tour is the place to be! The tour

Green Home Tour Tickets on Sale!

Self-Guided Tour of homes, gardens and businesses

Saturday, August 21 10-4 PM

Order online: www.eco-wnc.org

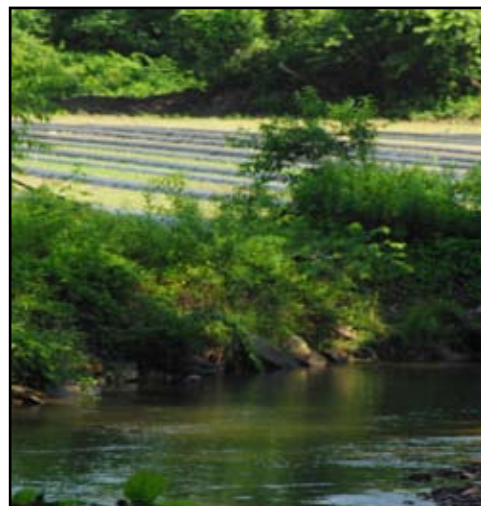
will be a great opportunity to speak with home and business owners about how the changes they have made have translated to healthier homes for both occupants and the environment, not to mention extra savings on energy bills.

The tour features something for everyone: new construction, renovations, retrofits, and green businesses. In addition, Advanced Thermal Solutions will feature a workshop on green technologies, including solar thermal to see first hand what’s involved. This self-guided tour will be held in conjunction with the Southern Energy and Environmental Expo at the WNC Agricultural Center August 20-22nd. Come out see what our community has done to green their homes and what you can do to take positive steps in the same direction. ■

ECO Responds to Degraded Water Quality in the Mills River Watershed

By Kara Raymond

Flowing out of the Pisgah National Forest, the headwaters of the Mills River Watershed are of pristine quality. However, just a few miles downstream from the forest boundary, the water quality in the Mills River drastically changes. This has landed the South Fork of the Mills River on the 2010 303d list of waters that do not meet state water quality standards and are considered impaired.



The Mills River is an extremely important water resource in the region. The Mills River is a water supply watershed for both Hendersonville and South Asheville, meaning that it is the source of drinking water that many of us depend on. Upper sections of the river are classified as High Quality Waters and Trout Waters. The Mills River provides ideal habitat for hellbenders, a giant salamander species of special concern in North

Carolina. The Mills River Watershed is also valued for fishing and kayaking and other recreational uses. Potential contamination from agriculture and development can adversely affect all these uses. Therefore working to restore the quality of the watershed needs to be a high priority in the region.

A fish kill in 2007 prompted
continued on page 3

Want to Protect Water Quality?

- BIOMONITORS NEEDED!** Get trained and join a team to help us monitor the health of our streams
- Want to ADOPT A STREAM?** Neighbors, church members and communities are learning to become the ‘eyes and ears’ of our streams.
- SWAT Teams Check on Problem Waterways.**
- Contact ECO for more details.

➔ INSIDE

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County Recycling Taking Giant Step Forward



Since our public forum in February, our committee has focused on organizing our exhibit and hands-on workshop at the ECO Earth Day event held at Blue Ridge Community College. We set up a large display of information, assisted County Sustainability Coordinator Alexis Baker with collection of household batteries; and performed a participatory game of “What Recycles, What Does Not?” with the attendees, many of whom were children. The recycling area was one of the highlights of Earth Day and Rick Burt ran the game with humor and passion.

Now we are aiming at having the City of Hendersonville install recycling bins on Main Street, with additional bins available for street festivals. ECO worked hard to demonstrate how this could be done by monitoring and encouraging recycling at the City’s second largest festival, the Garden Jubilee on May 29-30th. We monitored recycling bins and looked at the trash generated, while conducting a recycling survey of festival patrons.

The event generated over four tons of trash and recyclables in two days. The Recycling Committee pulled a significant amount of recyclable containers out of trash cans. We surveyed 200 people and 90% of them thought there were not enough recycling bins downtown; just 17 temporary recycle bins had been set out to cover the six blocks of festival. Results also showed that 90% of those surveyed “do” recycle at their homes.

Based on this survey it is clear that local residents want municipal recycling services to be required on Main Street both at the festivals as well as everyday. Our committee plans further meetings with City Council to achieve this goal. ■

DIRECTOR’S CORNER

Bridging A Blackening Gulf

By David Weintraub



The gusher in the Gulf is nothing but a wakeup call that living a high energy lifestyle is unsustainable. Rather than an aberration, the Deepwater Horizon continues a pattern of over 300 oil “spills” from deep sea drilling over the past 40 years, many of which effected the gulf. This has resulted in over 23 million gallons of oil turning our oceans into cesspools of petroleum.

I suppose we could wring our hands in agony and throw beer cans everytime the word “BP” is mentioned on our television screens. Or we can take action. As much as we might hate to admit it, the oil that is suffocating estuaries and destroying sea life is *our* oil. We drive to work, purchase goods that originate thousands of miles away, vacation via airplanes and fertilize our lawns. If there is any good that comes from this human disaster, it is that we commit ourselves to build a more sustainable community that is no longer reliant on fossil fuels to function.

Towards this end, ECO launched the first of a series of workshops that

will discuss how we can build a more resilient community that increasingly seeks way to unleash itself from fossil fuels. Its not just the environment that’s at stake. As oil and other non-renewable energy sources become scarcer to find, their cost will increasingly be out of reach to the average consumer. The steps we take today will not only save our planet, but provide a future for the next generation.

Some of the steps we are planning include:

- 1) Working with the downtown Hendersonville business community to increase their evolution to green energy. We are working with entire Main Street blocks to “solarize” them with solar hot water installations.
- 2) Developing an oil vulnerability tool that can help businesses and homeowners understand their risks as oil prices continue to rise, so they can take action now to ameliorate their potential exposure to future shocks.
- 3) Expand Project Green Light to encourage greater energy efficiency.

Come join us and help move our community into the new Age of Green EnLIGHTenment. ■

Henderson County Adopts A Stormwater Ordinance

On May 20th the Henderson County Board of Commissioners voted to adopt a County Stormwater Ordinance. By doing so, they took important steps forward to decrease the sediment and toxic load caused by stormwater runoff in Henderson County. This ordinance requires local enforcement of stormwater management practices. Instead of depending solely on the underfunded and inundated state stormwater enforcement agencies, Henderson County now has the power to police itself.

Nearly two dozen citizens came

out to voice their concern at the public hearing on March 30th and at a subsequent commission meeting in May. The common theme was that the County should adopt an ordinance that was more rigid than the State’s minimum requirements (based on the piedmont), by removing a loop hole in the ordinance for low-density projects.

Unfortunately neither of these was addressed by the Board of Commissioners. That said, this ordinance is still a victory bringing Henderson County one step closer to a more sustainable and healthy environment. ■

ECO LAUNCHES BACTERIAL TESTING PROGRAM

Onsite package plants are intended to serve as a waste treatment option for medium sized populations such as schools, churches, apartments, and trailer parks. When working properly, plants should be effective at disinfecting waste and discharging the treated effluent into waterways as regulated by permitting agencies. Currently, effluent pipes in Henderson County are being located and monitored by ECO interns and a regular program is expected to begin as early as this fall.

Ensuring that onsite package plants are not polluting our rivers and streams is one of the many goals at ECO. This is accomplished by having volunteers test for *Escherichia coli*, O157:H7 in package plant effluent. *E.*

coli is a strain of bacteria that indicates potential disease-causing contamination.



tion. The package plants that have been tested so far are functioning well, with only a few exceptions showing higher than normal concentrations of bacteria.

Having volunteers take the time

to monitor streams not only supplies important bacterial data for ECO, but provides a vigilant watchful eye in circumstances involving waterway impairment. Field volunteers have discovered three cases of stream-harming activities within the past month as a result of ECO's volunteer monitoring. These cases ranged from free roaming livestock, riparian zone destruction, and severe sedimentation due to timbering and construction operations.

Volunteers are needed to help monitor as many as 30 sites throughout Henderson County on a regular basis. Please contact ECO for more details at 692-0385. ■

MILLS RIVER, *continued from page 1*

the new listing of the South Fork of the Mills River on the 303d list. The North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) responded immediately to the fish kill and were able to determine that runoff from an agricultural field carried a high concentration of a fungicide into the river, leading to a toxic event in the South Fork of the Mills River. Historical and subsequent biological monitoring by DWQ has indicated that this was not an isolated event and will likely happen again. While the South Fork is the only section on the 303d list, the data also demonstrates that the issues that led to the 2007 fish kill exist throughout the Mills River Watershed.

This is not the first time the Mills River has been placed on the 303d list. In 1998 a segment of the main stem of the Mills River was put on the 303d list because it failed to meet state water quality standards. The cause was attributed to sediment and pesticide runoff from agricultural activities, including the production of cattle and tomatoes. The Mills River

Partnership, coordinated by Shaun Moore, was created to address the sources of pollution and work cooperatively with landowners. Several best management practices were implemented in the river segment, including restoring riparian buffers, installing stream exclusion fencing on cattle farms, stabilizing logging roads and cattle lanes, and moving pesticide mixing stations away from waterways. These efforts led to improved water quality and the removal of the Mills River from the 303d list in 2006.

Upon the recent announcement of the placement of the South Mills River on 303d list, ECO spearheaded discussions among organizational partners to understand the history of land use on the Mills River, effects on water quality and what steps we need to take as a cooperative group to solve the problems. Foremost we need to rebuild the Mills River Partnership, a stakeholder group, to pool both our knowledge and resources. We will need to work with landowners to locate areas on the landscape

that require restorative efforts and secure grant funding. Luckily we already have a Mills River Management Plan from 2002 that, with some updating, can serve as the basis of much of our work. Rather than becoming a punitive process, a renewed partnership between all concerned citizens can create some lasting changes that benefit the entire community.

ECO will be an active partner through all steps of restoring water quality to the Mills River. Over the past three years DWQ has been monitoring the watershed, but due to the loss of state funding they will not be able to continue monitoring in 2011. ECO is planning on picking up the slack by biomonitoring at DWQ sites. ECO is considering monitoring sediment levels in field runoff as well since recent development has increased the sediment load. Volunteers are needed now more than ever to get training in biomonitoring techniques and join a team or participate in our Adopt A Stream program to watchdog our waterways. ■

Gulf Gusher Spurs Reflection/Action

When former BP veteran, Jorge Pinon participated in a recent forum on the gusher in the gulf, he linked the environmental disaster devastating the Gulf Coast to current American consumer lifestyle choices. According to Pinon, every time there's a new subdivision built in the countryside, every time someone buys a case of plastic water bottles, or shops for their kids at Toy R Us or WalMart, they are supporting Big Oil's continued deepwater drilling throughout the world.

The United States is the world's largest consumer of oil -- accounting for about one-quarter of total global consumption, with more than 70 percent of US oil consumption going to transportation. Since highway construction, transportation systems, shopping mall configurations and residential building are all developed based on the availability of cheap oil, shifting to a more environmentally-friendly approach requires a major rethinking of how Americans run their lives.

Fortunately, a recent report from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance offers some encouraging possibilities that many states could shift to local renewable energy to dramatically move away from reliance on fossil fuels. In their report, *Energy Self-Reliant States*, the Institute concluded that all 36 states with either renewable energy goals or renewable energy mandates could meet them by relying on in-state renewable fuels. Sixty-four percent could be self-sufficient in electricity from in-state renewables; another 14



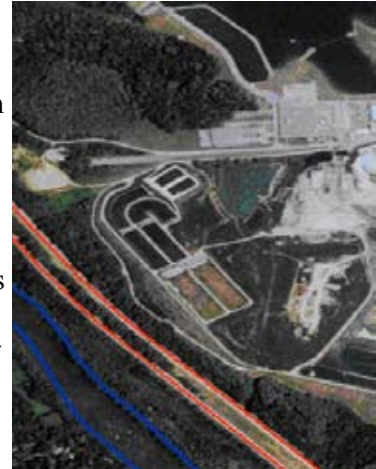
percent could generate 75 percent of their electricity from homegrown fuels. Coupling this with several major renewable projects throughout the country, such as FLS Energy's installation of photovoltaic cells on 11,000 residences in Camp LeJeune, plans to build the largest solar-electric farm in the world in Florida with a capacity of 25 MW that will power 3,800 homes, and the recent approval of a 3,700 acre, 165 MW wind farm in North Dakota that will power over 100,000 homes, all offers hope that the tide is indeed shifting.

Of course, few of these steps reduce our reliance on oil, i.e. transporting ourselves without reliance on gasoline and cutting our use of plastics and oil-based fertilizers and more.

Although electric cars have been hyped as the future, which would seamlessly convert gas guzzlers to electric powered clean-mobiles, this leaves many questions. Where will the electricity come from to produce them and the power to recharge them as fossil fuels become increasingly unaffordable? Electric vehicles require the total daily energy captured by the typical household solar array to power them for 30 miles, with no power left over to heat or cool a home. Greater mass transportation, walkable communities, and greater development of local resources will likely have more promise as we move into a greener, more sustainable society. ■

IS COAL ASH A WNC PROBLEM?

Western North Carolina has no coal mines and no mountaintops are being blown off in search of the black stuff in NC. However North Carolina is one of the biggest users of energy from coal in the country. As many learned just over a year ago, one of the hazardous by-products of coal-fired power plants is fly ash, the stuff that buried Kingston, Tennessee in 2008.



Aerial of Progress Energy

Progress Energy owns a 376 megawatt coal burning power plant in Skyland, next to the French Broad River. Since installing scrubbers several years ago, much of the fly ash the plant produces no longer wafts into the air. However the coal ash is held in two wet ash ponds next to the plant. Both of these dams have been listed by the EPA as "high hazard" dams because their failure could result in major destruction to prop-



Please donate your good condition rubber boots and waders for ECO's water quality volunteer monitoring programs.

PROBLEM?

erty, the environment and human life given their proximity to the French Broad River, I-26 and several communities. These coal ash dams are also un-lined.



Coal Fired Plant.

According to the EPA, fly ash contains a host of nasty toxins including arsenic, mercury, manganese, lead, iron, and boron. The biggest concern, according to Hartwell Carson, the French Broad Riverkeeper, is that groundwater near the dam has

demonstrated 116 instances of exceeding state limits for various pollutants including boron, chromium, manganese, lead, and pH. The fear is that several community wells that depend on this groundwater are close by and the French Broad is only 1000 feet away from the dams.

WNC Alliance and ECO are both considering joint action to assess the hazard caused by these coal ash dams and to encourage Progress Energy to take immediate steps to prevent another Kingston. ■

Check out our new website!
www.ECO-WNC.org



SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL GREEN BUSINESS

Pardee Hospital is Going Green . . .

Pardee Hospital is committed to being socially responsible. Living up to this principal, Pardee joined Practice Greenhealth, a non-profit organization founded on the principals of positive environmental stewardship. As a charter member of Practice Greenhealth, Pardee has committed to reduce its environmental footprint through the virtual elimination of mercury, overall waste reductions, minimizing the toxic substances and the design, construction and operation of its healthcare facility to ensure they significantly improve the collective impact of human and environmental



health. These efforts were recognized with two awards, the Partner Recognition Award and the Making Medicine Mercury-Free Award. The Partner Recognition Award is one of Practice Greenhealth's Environmental Excellence Awards given each year to honor outstanding environmental achievements in healthcare. The Making Medicine Mercury-Free Award is designated to organizations who displayed exceptional efforts to rid the healthcare sector of the harmful chemical mercury, commonly used in medical care. Pardee received these awards at the CleanMed 2010 global conference for healthcare's environmental leaders. ■



In support of ECO,

RBC Bank is proud to offer all current ECO members a free checking account, with free basic checks, free online services, and a free 3 x 5 safety deposit box (while supplies last). This offer is available at the Hendersonville location only. Please call (828) 698-6020 to speak with a banker for additional features, details and conditions.



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ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July-September 2010

Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month, 12:00 - 1:30 pm. Committee meetings are as follows:

Recycling Committee: 3rd Tuesday, 4:30 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.

JULY

Sat. 10 **Guided Bird Walk.** 8 am, Jackson Park, Hendersonville. Co-sponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.

Sat. 10 **Adopt A Stream Workshop.** 10-12 am, Learn about environmental threats to our waterways, what people are doing in their own backyards to combat pollution and become stewards of their streams. Wear walking shoes for the outdoor training segment. Refreshments provided. ECO Conference Room.



AUGUST

Sat. 7 **Guided Bird Walk.** 8 am, Jackson Park, Hendersonville. Cosponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.

Thu. 19 **ECO Open House.** Noon- 6 p.m. Come visit our office, enjoy refreshments, and talk with staff and board members about ECO's current and upcoming projects!

Sat. 21 **Green Homes Tour.** In conjunction with Southern Energy & Environmental Expo (SEE Expo). Come visit some great green homes and some commercial structures that demonstrate sustainable use of resources and a reduced impact on human health and the environment. Special this year, a free solar workshop for every ticket buyer. Tickets can be purchased online, from the ECO office, at the Hendersonville/Asheville Visitor's Center or at the ECO booth at the SEE Expo.

SEPTEMBER

Sat. 11 **Guided Bird Walk.** 8 am, Jackson Park, Hendersonville. Cosponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.



Sat. 12 **ECO Whitewater Rafting Day.** Trips held all day. Join ECO and Green River Adventures, for a great day on the Green River, while supporting ECO's work. Trips offer family fun as well as levels for more adventure-seekers. See www.eco-wnc.org for schedule, prices, information.

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 TO COME ... Environmental Film Festival Oct. 8-9, Annual Meeting Oct 23rd , Green Energy Workshops and more . . .

Join Us!



Help make a difference,
join our committees! It's a
great way to get involved!

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Green Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |

Please check your category of membership:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Corporate \$ _____ | Maple _____ \$65 |
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| Sycamore _____ \$250 | Oak _____ \$25 |
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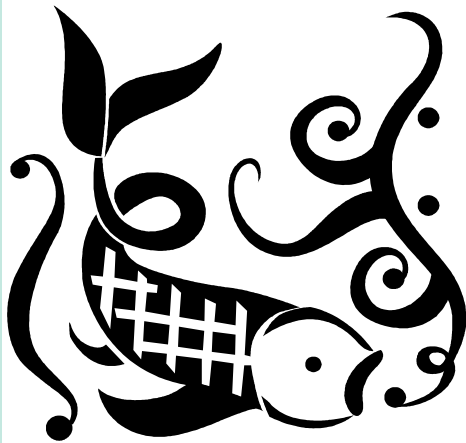
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Phone number _____ (day) _____ (night)

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121 Third Ave., W.
Suite #4 downtown
Hendersonville (around
the corner from Mike's
on Main)

Adopt -A- Stream

Tel: 828-692-0385

Learn about environmental threats to our waterways, what people are doing to combat pollution, and how to become the steward of a stream in your own backyard. Wear your walking shoes for optional outdoor training!

*Saturday
July 10th
10am - noon*



Adopt A Stream Workshop Coming This Summer

In response to the recent addition of the South Mills River to the national list of impaired streams, more residents of Henderson County are taking an interest in water quality. ECO's Adopt-A-Stream program is a great way for concerned citizens to take the health of local streams into their own hands. "Adopters" act as the first line of defense against pollution. They now survey the water, stream bank, and riparian environments which has broadened their scope from stream clean-up crews to stream stewards.

Here at ECO we recently had the pleasure of adding two new groups to our growing Adopt-A-Stream family (which currently includes scout groups, businesses, home associations, and church congregations). The ultimate goal at Adopt-A-Stream is to find loving guardians for every stream in Henderson County. To accomplish this we are talking to local churches and organizations about the importance of protecting our water resources and giving them the support they need to adopt a stream of their own.

If your club, church, or neighborhood would like to Adopt-A-Stream or learn more about the program, you're invited to come to an interactive workshop on July 10th, 10am at the ECO office or call 692-0385 to request a volunteer to bring a presentation to you! ■

THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

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