



Environmental and Conservation Organization ♦ www.eco-wnc.org ♦ 828-692-0385 ♦ Jan-March 2009

Heritage Apple Trees To Blossom in Winter!

To celebrate Apple Country and renew the old timey varieties that grew in the Southern Appalachians for generations, ECO will once again hold its popular Heritage Apple Tree Sale in February. We have varieties for every palate, all guaranteed to satisfy.

This year, our annual sale includes:

- Bramley's Seedling:** green yellow, tart
- Cox Orange:** red, orange, sweet & juicy
- Enterprise:** deep red, spicy tart flavor

Antique Apple Tree Sale
Sat, Feb. 7, 9 AM - 2 PM
Hendersonville Visitor's Center

- Freedom:** bright red blush, semi-tart
- Fuji:** crunchy, sweet and spicy flavor
- Grimes Golden:** pollinator, golden, crisp
- Horse:** large yellowish, good for pies
- June Red:** red coloring, crisp, tart
- Liberty:** bright red, semi-tart
- Limbertwig:** greenish-yellow pie apple
- Mollies Delicious:** pink-red, crisp, juicy
- Shockley:** yellow, sweet and rich
- Spitzenburg:** orange-red, aromatic flavor
- William's Pride:** crisp, juicy sweet-tart

For a full list of each apple variety with more details: www.eco-wnc.org

All trees are one year old grafts in 2-gallon containers, 3-4 feet semi-dwarf apple trees that historically grew in the southeast.

Order your trees online at: www.eco-wnc.org or call us at 692-0385. Trees not pre-ordered or picked up by noon will be sold to last minute shoppers.

ECO VOICE is generously underwritten by Diamond Brand Outdoors.

Protecting Our Natural Heritage While Development Slows *(temporarily)*

We live in interesting times. Henderson County is surrounded by majestic mountain ranges and is the proud home to six watersheds. Whether one is a hiker, farmer, nature-lover, kayaker, or apple eater, there is something to enjoy and appreciate about living here. No doubt, this is why Henderson County has experienced unprecedented growth in the past several years.

We are often told of the value of growth to our local economy in terms of increased revenue and jobs. However, anyone who has recently read their property tax bill knows those promised revenues never quite pay

for infrastructure costs. Now it's time to pay the piper. With exceptional drought, water restrictions, increasing traffic, and worsening streambanks, the cost of unregulated development has finally reared its ugly head.

According to Henderson County native and well-driller, Jerry Merrill, for policymakers to approve developments without scientific data on its impact on water, schools, fire departments, road and ambulances is simply taking an ostrich view of the future. Merrill learned firsthand of the consequences of such blind policies as a member of

the county's Etowah/Horseshoe small area planning process. According to Merrill, "The county is sitting on a time-bomb on a number of issues including water use, sewer, transportation and garbage. Failing to look at the bigger picture could come at a tremendous cost to the county and to current residents."

Merrill suggests that before any large scale development is approved, engineering studies be conducted on the availability of wells, plans for sewage, and their impact on roadways. With county waterways at the lowest level in recorded history and wastewater treatment plants



planned just upstream from future water supply, such foresight is critical to our future.

North Carolina is currently reviewing its water use rules to look at whether golf courses, homeowners and industry should have the same rights to water, or whether a priority system be established. These questions may well dictate the future of our community. Work with ECO in 2009 to help answer them.

➡ INSIDE

- Director's Corner ... pg. 2
- ECO Committees ... pg. 2,5
- Calendar of Events ... pg. 3
- News Briefs from Region ... pg. 4

ECO'S COMMITTEES ON A ROLL

Recycling Committee

Thanks in part to ECO's involvement, many things have occurred at the county level this past year including the hiring of a sustainability coordinator and a new solid waste manager, the approval of a 20 year vision for solid waste that includes increased recycling, progress on redesigning the transfer station, and a meeting with the waste haulers. The committee educated itself on the status of recycling in the county, gathered educational materials to be used at booths and held a booth at Mast General Store for Earth Day. We also helped coordinate recycling at the Apple Festival for the first time, and provided volunteers to man a booth and "monitor" the recycling bins, and supported recycling at other events such as the Blue Ridge BBQ Festival and the Flat Rock Music Festival. The committee also did research, wrote several articles for the newspaper, promoted the County's efforts to set up recycling at Jackson Park, and toured Curb-side Management's Materials Recovery Facility. We will collaborate with the League of Women Voters on a forum. *See calendar (pg. 3) for details.*

Welcome to A New Staff Member

There's a new face at ECO these days, our new Administrative Assistant, Alexandra Meyer. Alexandra is certainly not new to the environmental movement having worked with Quality Forward and WNC Alliance. She is a recent graduate from Warren Wilson College in Environmental Policy.

Amy Garascia has capably helped steer ECO's helm over the past year and we wish her a fond goodbye as she moves to take the Woodland Stewardship Series statewide.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

2008 was certainly an eventful year in Henderson County and the region.



Those working to balance growth with protection of our natural heritage had mixed success.

The "mini-city in the country," otherwise known as the Glen and

Highlands was soundly defeated by citizens' action and then by the courts. But the Board of Commissioners violated the county's Comprehensive Plan yet again by approving public water to Cobblestone Village in Green River, a very rural community.

Our region has been strapped by an exceptional drought that pushed our waterways to the lowest levels ever recorded. Many of our water quality volunteers were shocked to find extremely low water levels, few riffles (which are vital to oxygenate waterways to support life), and a substantially reduced bug count.

The City of Hendersonville implemented mandatory water restrictions for a time and we were heartened to hear from dozens of people on the steps they were taking to conserve water. Our water conservation contest winner had conserved over 30,000 gallons of water over a two month period.

ECO launched its **Campaign to**

Protect Our Rural Spaces in an attempt to rally local citizens to support a set of rules that would add some teeth to our Land Development Code, namely the creation of an Open Space Plan, farmland preservation plans that include Transferable Density Rights, environmental assessments for developers including an assessment of available water *before* developments are approved, the adoption of a local stormwater management ordinance, and preliminary work on a groundwater/surface water study.

I receive emails and calls every day from concerned citizens who wonder why developments are still allowed to exhaust limited water supplies, build on ridges where water is in short supply, build golf courses without planting drought resistant vegetation and the like. The short answer is that our policymakers will not have the political will to take actions like these unless they are empowered by the citizenry. If they hear almost exclusively from the development community, they will assume things are fine the way they are.

These times call for bold action. As concerned citizens we need to be sure our elected officials hear from us frequently. Why not make 2009 the year you commit to a *new* New Year's resolution, to join an ECO committee and work with us to create the change we want to see? *David Weintraub, Executive Dir.*

WATER QUALITY EXPANSION PLANS PICKING UP STEAM

The water quality committee is forging ahead with two new programs:

1. SMIE Biomonitoring

Biomonitoring helps evaluate a stream's ability to support life. A pristine mountain stream would naturally support a diverse community of benthic macroinvertebrates. As pollution levels rise, the more sensitive organisms are no longer able to survive in the degraded habitat. ECO is transitioning to the SMIE (Stream Monitoring Information Exchange) protocol which requires a greater capacity for benthic macroinvertebrate identification than the previous method. Please join us for SMIE training in March. *(see calendar pg. 3)*

2. The SWAT Team Program

Through our stream monitoring programs, ECO has collected over 16 years worth of data on the chemical and biological components of water quality in Henderson County. So now what? SWAT teams. The SWAT team program envisions a task force of volunteers who will respond to water quality problems through community outreach, advocacy and education. Training sessions will be held to educate the public on a variety of water quality issues including erosion and sedimentation, illicit discharge, and stormwater runoff.

ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January-March 2009

Board meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of each month, 12:00 pm. **Recycling Committee** meets the second Tuesday at 4:30 pm, **Water Quality Committee** meets the second Wednesday at 4:30 pm, **Energy Committee** meets the second Thursday at 4:00 pm and the **Green Infrastructure Committee** meets the third Thursday at 4:00 pm. All meetings are held at the ECO office. Visitors are welcome. Contact ECO for details.

JANUARY

Sat. 10 **20th Annual Hendersonville Christmas Tree Recycling Project.** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Jackson Park. Make this your seasonal gift to the earth.

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



FEBRUARY

Water Quality Master Classes. Five week course, choice of Tuesdays from 9-12 (starting on 2/3) or Weds (starting on 2/4) from 6-9 at Cooperative Extension. Taught by water quality expert Diane Silver. Call to reserve a spot: (828) 692-0385

Tues. 3 **GOING GREEN Lecture Series: Finding the Balance between Growth & Our Natural Heritage** 7 p.m. Historic Johnson Farm. View a film by ECO Executive Director, David Weintraub, "Henderson County – a Lasting Legacy or a Vanishing Jewel?" and have a discussion of successful efforts that can accommodate growth while protecting our county's rural character. Cosponsored by ECO and Historic Johnson Farm. \$4.00

Sat. 7 **Heritage Apple Trees Sale and Pickup.** 9 a.m.-noon. Hendersonville Visitors Center, 201 S. Main St. Pre-ordered trees must be picked up between 9 a.m. and noon. Those not picked up will be sold at noon. Visit the ECO website at www.eco-wnc.org for a list of trees and ordering details.

Tues. 10 **GOING GREEN Lecture Series: Henderson County's Environmental Heritage and How to Protect It.** 7 p.m. Historic Johnson Farm. A panel discussion with Brian Thompkins, US Fish and Wildlife; Renee Kumor, Henderson Co. Planning Board; Diane Silver, Mud Creek Watershed Coordinator. ECO, Historic Johnson Farm, sponsors \$4.00

Thu. 12 **Insulating Your Home.** 7 p.m. Henderson Public Library. Workshop on how-tos with experts.

Sat. 14 **Guided Bird Walk.** 9 a.m. Jackson Park, Hendersonville. Cosponsored by ECO and Henderson County Bird Club.

Tues. 17 **Recycling Forum: Where Are We Now and Where We Are Going?** 7 p.m. Henderson County Public Library A panel of local and regional experts will discuss solid waste and recycling issues. Cosponsored by ECO and the League of Women Voters.



Tues. 17 **GOING GREEN Lecture Series: Bird Migration, Habitats, and Nesting Patterns.** 7 p.m. Historic Johnson Farm. Enlightening presentation by Rich Leppingwell, president of the Henderson County Bird Club. Cosponsored by ECO and Historic Johnson Farm. \$4.00

Tues. 24 **GOING GREEN Lecture Series: Environmentally Friendly Building and/or Remodeling Practices.** 7 p.m. Historic Johnson Farm. Focus on product choices and benefits in terms of maintenance, tax and insurance credits, air quality and more! Presented by Ken Gaylord, architect of 310 S Main, Hendersonville's first certified green building.

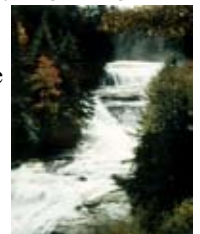
MARCH

Tues. 3 **GOING GREEN Lecture Series: No-Fail Plants for Southern Gardens** 7 p.m. Historic Johnson Farm. Ingrid McNair, Farm Coordinator and gardening enthusiast, to learn about plants that do well in a variety of growing conditions. Cosponsored by ECO and Historic Johnson Farm. \$4.00

Sat. 14 **Biomonitoring Training Session for Volunteer Stream Monitors.** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Blue Ridge Community College, Arts & Science Bldg, Room 116. Updated training for volunteers to identify macroinvertebrates in our waterways as part of ECO's biomonitoring program.

Sat. 14 **Guided Bird Walk.** 9 a.m. Jackson Park, Hendersonville.

Sat. 21 **Marvelous Malarkey Dinner Theatre.** 6:30 p.m. Blue Ridge Performing Arts Center. Celebrate Spring featuring music by Hot Duck Soup, improvisational comedy by Gag Order, and a capella harmonies by the Atomic Sisterhood.



UPCOMING EVENTS: : April is Bio-Monitoring Month! April 25; Earth Day ECO Energy Expo

See our website for updated dates and directions.

ECO VOICE is now available online at www.eco-wnc.org

•Environmental and Conservation Organization • ECO • 121 Third Ave. West, Suite 4, Hendersonville, NC 28792 • (828) 692-0385 • www.eco-wnc.org •

NEWS BRIEFS

WNC – The Next Solar Capital?

Imagine Western North Carolina as the sustainability capital of the world. For years WNC has been a leading spot for solar powered innovation. Recent projects include solar panels standing tall on the YWCA building in Asheville, photovoltaic panels lining the top of the Jim Barkley Toyota dealership and a “solar farm” being built in Haywood County. A recent announcement to build a 900,000 square foot facility in Fletcher Business Park has truly placed WNC into the solar spotlight.

Currently, a majority of WNC is powered by coal-burning facilities and nuclear power plants. Recent consumer studies made it clear that North Carolinians want more opportunities to invest in green power. Progress Energy has begun to expand its offerings of green power through its commitment to buy power from the “solar farm” in Haywood County. Duke Energy has begun building solar panels on the roofs of their customer’s houses.

The most common green power sources found in the United States include wind, solar, hydro, geothermal and biomass. They are considered “green” power because they are from renewable sources and they emit little or no pollution.

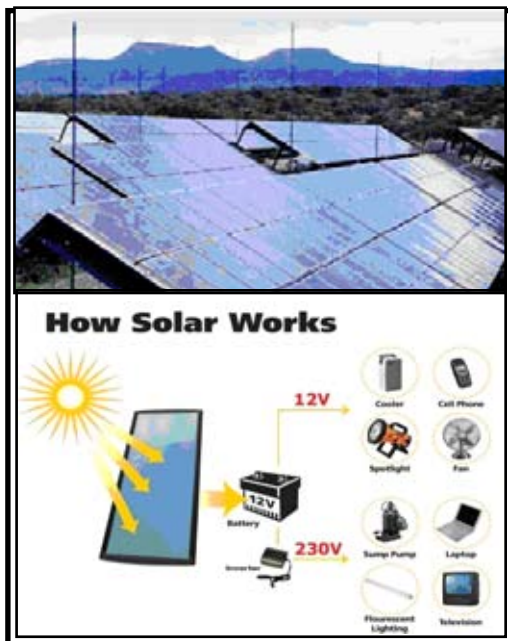
This is in contrast to nuclear power which has a major impact on greenhouse gas emissions in the course of uranium mining, milling, processing, enrichment, fuel fabrication and waste storage.

An exciting new project is taking place right here in Henderson County. Appalachian Solar Energy was recently purchased by Vanir Energy, a California based company recently chartered by North Carolina. The Fletcher Business Park

will have 640 solar panels placed on the roof of the facility creating 1.5 megawatts of power for the building. This endeavor will be just the beginning of a \$14 million installation of solar panels across North Carolina. Energy costs for the

business park will be fixed for the next twenty years. The project will create 58 new jobs and will become the largest thermal heating and cooling system in the world.

To become involved in the green power movement, homeowners can purchase green power through their energy provider. In return this process adds finances to invest in more renewable energy. Individuals may also purchase renewable energy certificates (REC’s). REC’s are a literal purchase of green power certificates providing money for new research and continued environmental energy efforts.



CAMPAIGN GROWS TO PROTECT RURAL SPACES

The Green Infrastructure Committee was formed in early 2008 to get more actively engaged in land use planning issues as they affect the environment. Of particular interest are:

- Developing comprehensive Open Space regulations
- Developing Transferable Density Rights regulations to protect farms
- Researching studies tying availability of water to development approval
- Water conservation issues

Four subcommittees were formed: Petition Drive, Public Policy, Outreach, and Small Area Planning. Outreach has held two town hall meetings to interest the public in development issues and get their input, in Edneyville and Green River. Additionally, ECO’s film on planning the future of Henderson County has been shown to over a dozen organizations.

The petition drive has signed up over 1500 people concerned about putting greater teeth into the Land Development Code. The Public Policy Committee has gathered ordinances from other counties and they are reviewing the Land Development Code in order to specifically address stormwater run-off; open space; conservation subdivisions; developer donation of property for public facilities, parks and recreation; APFOs; steep slope construction; ridge development; and clearcutting. The GI committee has also given input to the small area planning process in the Etowah/Horseshoe area.

The Committee strongly recommends that a Regional Wastewater Authority be established to centralize existing and future Wastewater Treatment Facilities on and around the French Broad River. In the Etowah area there have been sewage spillages from the package sewage treatment facilities.

Our objective in 2009 is to be prepared to submit our recommendations to the county commissioners while working together with concerned residents and organizations.

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 Infra-structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | |

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 Ave. West, Ste 4, Hendersonville, NC 28792 (828) 692-0385 or join online at www.eco-wnc.org**

PROJECT GREEN LIGHT LAUNCHES

ECO's Energy Committee's Project Green Light has drawn six churches and over 85 people interested in saving energy in their homes. Presentations to five local churches culminated in a project kickoff at the library on October 21. Two workshops: *The Green, the Bad and the Ugly* (hidden energy losses) and *Investing in Your Home/Investing in the Planet* (cost of energy saving projects) were held and many more are planned for 2009.



The project has secured the commitment of four home energy inspectors willing to provide discounted inspections, an important first step to insure energy changes are most effective. Project participants commit to a goal of at least a 15% reduction in their energy usage through changing habits, do-it-yourself projects, or hiring a professional. Results will be measured by recording utility bills throughout the coming year. Recognition and prizes await the best efforts. If you haven't signed up yet, you still can. And the Project Green Light team is willing to come to your church, community group or subdivision to make a presentation on the benefits of joining.

Interested? ... A workshop on insulation is scheduled at 7 PM, Thursday February 12, 2009 at the Henderson County Library. **A blog?** Yes, Project Green Light has started a blog to post helpful ideas and announce additional events. Take a look at: <http://ecogreenlight.blogspot.com/>.

We need help! ... Project Green Light is gaining participants and the Earth Day Energy Expo is coming up on April 25 at Blue Ridge Community College. Want to be a better steward of the environment? The Energy Committee is the place to make it happen. Join us on the second Thursday of the month at 4:00 in the ECO office.

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL GREEN BUSINESS

ECO VOICE focuses on local businesses who have made important strides in environmental stewardship.



The Hendersonville Community Co-op just celebrated its 25th year in Henderson County. By definition a cooperative is an institution dedicated to fostering a sense of community by maintaining local control and governance by its local members. For decades, the co-op has been the preeminent location for locally grown produce as well as local crafts. Besides helping to lower its carbon footprint, promoting local farms and craftspeople it ensures that the money stays in the community, a benefit to everyone. Local foods sold here include produce, local beer, canned jar fruits, local meats and eggs.

Among the environmentally-friendly practices the co-op adheres to include: all produce is 100% organic, the co-op deli is mostly organic using all natural products, they use all recycled paper for all equipment and printing and have cut down on paper usage, they purchase energy star equipment which reduces energy, they recycle all electronics and recycle packing materials with local businesses, and 95% of cardboard waste is recycled.

Plans for the future include getting "green office certification" and offering incentives for people taking public transportation or walking and bicycling to the co-op.

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND
CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION**
121 THIRD AVENUE WEST, SUITE 4
HENDERSONVILLE, NC 28792
(828) 692-0385

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Directors

David Weintraub, Executive Director, *ECO Voice* editor
Alexandra Meyer, Administrative Assistant
Stephanie Grant, Water Quality Administrator

Mary Jo Padgett, Founding Executive Director

**This issue of ECO VOICE was generously
underwritten by Diamond Brand Outdoors.**

Printed on recycled paper

Invest In Our Mountains

We all value clean water, our natural habitats and our rural community character. Yet with unprecedented growth in our midst, a stronger voice for the environment is essential. For over two decades, ECO, the Environmental and Conservation Organization has been working to protect our natural heritage.

**Support ECO's Mountaintop Campaign
and help us climb to the next level**

To make a tax deductible donation contact ECO at
(828) 692-0385, online at www.eco-wnc.org or mail to:
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