

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**NC Mountain Resources Commission**  
**1:00 – 3:00 PM, October 21, 2011**  
**NC Forest Service Training Facility**  
**6065 Linville Falls Highway, Crossnore, NC**

*The mission of the NC Mountain Resources Commission is to take care of our natural resources to enhance and sustain quality of life and ensure the long term health of our region and our people.*

MRC Members in Attendance: David Gantt, Mike Butrum, Harris Prevost, Max Hopper, Bill Gibson, Charles Vines, Jason Robinson, Barbara Volk, Harris Prevost, George Santucci, Angie Chandler

Others: Mike Cheek, Marvin Hoffman, Judy Francis, Greg Yates

**Welcome New Members and Introductions**

Chairman Gantt announced that Mike Butrum is a new appointment to the Commission (House). He is a realtor and is a veteran and served at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (1965-1967).

Jason Robinson is also attending the meeting as the representative of the WNC Public Lands Council for now. Once a new Chair is elected from that group, that person will be the representative on the MRC.

**About the NC Forest Service Crossnore Facility**

Greg Yates, the Regional Forester for the western area of 32 counties in four districts welcomed everyone to the facility. They grow white pine stock here and also have lots of training. Frazier Fir nursery and genetics research is undertaken here. General forest management techniques are also demonstrated. Law enforcement training is conducted at the firing range. Harris said Grandfather Mountain is very close, and he asked if any research on hemlock wooly adelgid is being done here. Greg said some technical assistance for private property owners and grant for control on target areas on state-owned land is what they are doing on that issue. George Santucci asked if they were propagating any hemlock. Greg said they were not at this point. He introduced his employee, Mike Cheek who was also in attendance.

**Approval of August 26, 2011 Meeting Summary**

Chairman Gantt asked everyone to review the summary of the August meeting. George Santucci made a motion to approve the summary as presented. The motion received a second from Max Hopper and was unanimously approved.

**Update on WNC Sustainability & Vitality Index**

Jim Fox, Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee, provided an update on the report card project via conference call. A handout of his talking points was provided. MRC members need to be involved in reviewing draft. Determining appropriate categories for metrics that cross over into various areas is a challenge and feedback is important. An in-depth overview of the draft will be scheduled for the December 9 MRC meeting. Barbara Volk asked if it is possible to zoom in and get finer details. Jim said you'll be able to do that with the interactive map viewer. Max asked when the website would be live. MRC members can review it later in November, but it will be password protected. We'll incorporate feedback and open it up to the general public by the end of January. Max suggested we may want to allow some other folks to look at it also and build support and get input. Mike Butrum asked how other initiatives are incorporated like the Land Of Sky Evolve Energy project. Jim said data will be shared, and

TAC members can incorporate narratives from projects they are affiliated with. He mentioned the background of connections to the US Forest Service report card and other projects. A copy was provided to each member. David said we need to make sure that we have the MRC stamp on it, so he asked for volunteers to work closely with the TAC. George Santucci, Mike Butrum, Charles Vines, and Max Hopper volunteered to help review the draft. George may be able to participate from ASU in Boone. Max asked if the website would allow additional areas in the future. Jim said it would because it was designed to expand as needed. Max said there could be potential political problems if someone thinks their area is shown in a bad light on some metric. Angie said the NC Dept. of Cultural Resources and tourism staff are really helping us.

### **Discussion of Slope Issue Recommendations**

Chairman Gantt said he asked Rep. McGrady for his thoughts on what is the best way to present and disseminate this information. He also wants to discuss the issue with Jay Luetze. The MRC needs to stay fact-based – but say it tactfully and respectfully. Charles Vines said there are sensitive issues that we need to be cautious about because some of the issues are important. We need to do a retreat again and see if we need to drop some things or add new ones. Judy recommended that they ask elected state officials to look at this. Jonathon Jordan, Ray Rapp, Chuck McGrady said they would. Chairman Gantt said he wants Jay to look at it first. Mike Butrum said they need to develop an official process, and then do that before general public releases. David said he would go to Raleigh with Mike Butrum to see Speaker Tillis. Mike Butrum said he still believes they need to do a model ordinance and fill in the blanks on specifics for that county that the county adopts so it's not an unfunded mandate from the state. Harris Prevost said these recommendations are a developer's best friend.

David asked the members to think about process. What is the consensus on how to proceed? Review our enabling legislation where it says we are to keep the Governor / Lieutenant Governor, Senate Pro Tem and Speaker, COGs and members of the Western Delegation informed. Mike Butrum will set up a meeting to discuss the issue with Speaker Tillis. David Gantt will talk to Rep. Rapp, Rep. McGrady, and Sen. Nesbitt. George Santucci will talk to Rep. Jordan. Charles Vines will talk to Rep. Gillespie and Sen. Hise, and Rep. Frye. Judy will work up talking points for these discussions. Afterwards, they will send Judy comments to be recorded and then circulated to the entire MRC membership.

### **Discussion and Approval of Internal Operating Procedures**

The 6<sup>th</sup> version of the draft has been circulated and Max Hopper got a lot of good feedback. Copies were passed out and Max noted that the changes requested were in bold / italics. He suggested that they can adopt the draft now and add a financial handling section at a later date. Judy can add the appropriate legislative statute notation. Chairman Gantt asked if there were any more issues to be discussed. No additional comments were forthcoming. Harris Prevost made a motion to adopt the draft Internal Operating Procedures with the appropriate statute notations to be inserted by Judy Francis. Jason Robinson provided a second to the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

### **Other Business**

Bill Gibson said Tom Massie is improving since his accident in Georgia.

Judy Francis asked everyone to review the draft *Resolution re: Appalachian State University Support for WNC Economic Index* and explained the background and reasons why it was prepared. The university has cut funding for the index, and continuation of that data source will be critical to keep the report card up to date. Harris Prevost suggested that she contact the Dean of the Business School. She said she spoke with him and he said that a resolution would help get the support to reinstitute the funding.

Charles Vines made a motion to approve the resolution. Angie Chandler gave a second to the motion and it was approved unanimously. Judy will prepare a copy for David Gantt to sign and circulate a final copy to members so they can share with other groups who may also use the data provided by the index.

Harris Prevost said the MRC should work with others to set the top five legislative priorities as a region. Jonathon Jordon said that would be helpful, and Harris wants to see that practice started again. That would mean trip to Raleigh, and we should be prepared to discuss the top 5 budget items and top 5 non-budget items. Let's make that an item to discuss at the retreat in January.

Chairman Gantt said he wants to hold a half-day strategic planning retreat for the MRC in January. It will be on the afternoon of January 13 or 20. Judy will poll the members about which day works best and let everyone know which date is decided. She will also prepare a survey for members to fill out prior to the retreat.

**NEXT MEETING:**           December 9, 2011  
                                  Location TBA in Buncombe County.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM.