

MEETING SUMMARY
NC Mountain Resources Technical Advisory Council
August 26, 2011
10:00 AM – Noon
Ashe County Public Library
West Jefferson, NC

Members in Attendance: Jim Fox, Rick Wooten, Todd Cherry, Karen Smith, Bill Yarborough, DJ Gerken, Marvin Hoffman, Eric Romaniszyn (by phone)

Others in Attendance: David Gantt, Gordon Small, Valerie True, George Santucci, Linda Giltz, Judy Francis

Call to Order

Jim Fox called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM, and asked the members if there were any additions or deletions from the agenda that was previously sent out. Eric Romaniszyn asked to add a soil & erosion control issue on agenda. Jim Fox said it could be placed at the end of the agenda for a brief comment.

Approval of May 20, 2011 Meeting Summary

Jim Fox asked if there were any requested amendments to the draft of the May 20, 2011 meeting summary that was sent out previously. Rick Wooten made a motion to approve the summary as presented. Marvin Hoffman gave a second to the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Discussion of Regional Sustainability Report Card

Jim Fox is continuing work on the report card project utilizing the data you sent to him by TAC members and others. Jim stressed that everybody knows what data they are responsible for and it is important that they follow through and get that information on the portal. It will be on-line, but also in pdf format for people who want to download it. That means that we have to write the narrative that explain the pictures we show. Some sections have enough information, but others need much more. There are five main geographic sections, broken out by COG boundaries. Sections will include the built environment, social, economic, and environmental indicators. Jim showed some PowerPoint slides of the work that has been done to date.

Members commented on various issues, such as: Forested land data looks misleading as it only shows 100% forest, but not mixed forest so it looks like there isn't very much. Soil system map looks good. Granitic gneiss and acid producing rock maps need to be included because they are building materials, computer materials and also present barriers (water quality) unstable slopes, asbestos. Information about rock type has pros and cons. David Gantt said most people don't know the pros and cons, so the narrative should explain it. The story and charts can be in the narrative which accompanies the map. DJ said the information should show what has economic value and what poses development challenge. The shale gas issue should not directly affect the mountain region as there is none here. The landslide hazard maps have limitations

due to scale of data. Rick Wooten said we have known landslide locations (active since recording events since 1916 – about 100 years of data). He asked that the word “documented” be in front of the phrase “landslide events”. Delete the word “location” and replace with “events”. The members also discussed how to incorporate NC Natural Heritage data. Judy Francis said the maps will be at a large scale where specific sites would not necessarily show up. David Ray said we should add the guild information from the NCDENR Conservation Planning Tool since it really is landscape scale, not identifying specific sites. Jim said we need to ask Paul Muller if there is appropriate data sets to include regarding air quality. Judy said we should show non-attainment areas, because they have big potential economic impacts. The land cover map uses the latest data available, but that is 2006 so there has been a lot of land conversion change since then. We should include a “series” to highlight the amount of change, an historical perspective up to future projections. This should indicate the need for density in appropriate areas because we are starting to develop on farmlands and other areas best suited to other uses.

DJ Gerken said that the information about the acres of developed land per person over time is important. It also needs to be recognized that existing local and regional comprehensive plans vary greatly in age and quality, and this is problematic. Judy Francis said that we also need to discuss the impacts of urbanization in the narrative. Not all urbanization is bad, and in some places its appropriate and desirable. Tax performance could potentially be another illustration of density versus sprawl. The problem is that taxes are not all being assessed using the same criteria across all 27 counties. David Ray asked about housing affordability and if that information should be included. Forest fragmentation should also be illustrated on a map. Water supply and use by sector – Jim Fox said he doesn’t have water supply / use by sector for all counties yet, but he has it for 13 of them so far. Bill Yarborough stated that the state water use data noted for the agricultural sector was incorrect because agriculture doesn’t use that much water. Jim said this data does not include private wells, agricultural withdrawals from ponds, and more. Bill Yarborough said he would work with Jim to get the information corrected. Jim also mentioned energy resources mapping and that Land of Sky Regional Council has a clean energy assets map. Rick Wooten said there is money potentially available to assess geothermal resources. Other data sets being included are transportation (inc. major highways, railroads), home values, population density (2006 data) median age based on census blocks, lands managed for recreation (George Santucci said this needs more info than is currently shown. Jim will add the data George will send to him.) Linda Giltz mentioned they should add city and county, and state parks. Todd Cherry has metrics for healthcare and disease rates. Rob Bell is putting together metrics and gathering data for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area arts / culture / music heritage / craft heritage metrics. The EPA has an environmental justice study map. Todd has sent a lot more data, but it still needs to be filtered for just the 27 counties. Bill Yarborough will provide additional agricultural data , such loss of prime farmland data over time. George said we should add data regarding the Christmas tree industry. Jim reminded everyone that they need to finalize the metrics so they can make the prototype over next six weeks. We need to have a good working report card by January to keep on the project schedule.

Discussion of MRC Action on Slope Recommendations

Judy Francis said the MRC will look at the slope recommendations at their meeting later today and see what they want to start working on. She said she thought that they will begin to make progress on this. Karen Smith said the education pieces could be done easily at low-cost. DJ Gerken said he thought the resource manual would be a good place to start.

Eric Romaniszyn – Soil & Erosion Control Issue

Eric said he is working with NGOs in 7 western counties on a soil & erosion control training program suitable for the mountains. They are trying to find \$ to build a resource and delivery system. Z. Smith Reynolds is a potential funders. The EPA 319 grant program needs a state match that is no longer available. He will send out email with text about this initiative.

Gordon Small – Haywood County Slope Mapping Initiative

Gordon Small from Haywood Waterways made a brief PowerPoint presentation about the slope issue and BMP development. The initiative they are working on is voluntary. They would like to encourage appropriate development, so if the project complies with the assessment findings, then develop according to the findings, then the county should reimburse for the cost of assessment. Having landslide hazard mapping is critical. Haywood County agreed to maintain contract to conduct the mapping there, and now they need to raise money. It's not just Haywood County, there are many other counties that need to be mapped. He is working with a number of funders to begin the process of gathering resources to undertake the project.

Determine Next Meeting Date

Jim Fox said the TAC needs to have another meeting before the next scheduled MRC meeting. RENCI will host an interim meeting at their Asheville Office on October 4th (9:00 – 11:00 AM).

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.