

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**NC Mountain Resources Technical Advisory Council**  
**November 19, 2010**  
**Jackson County Senior Center, Sylva, NC**

**Members in Attendance:** Jim Fox, Karen Smith, Paul Muller, Rick Wooten, DJ Gerken, Bill Yarborough, Eric Romaniszyn, Andy Brown, Bill Eaker

**Members Absent:** Marvin Hoffman, Walter Clark, David Ray, Steve Tedder (resigned due to retirement)

**Also in Attendance:** Judy Francis, Juleigh Sitton

Call to Order

Jim Fox called the meeting to order at 10:15 AM.

Approval of October 25, 2010 Meeting Summary

Jim Fox asked if anyone had any corrections they would like to see made to the draft summary of the October 25, 2010 meeting. Rick Wooten made a motion to approve the summary with one spelling correction on page 2 (“weigh” instead of “weight”). Bill Yarborough gave a second to the motion which was approved unanimously.

Discussion of Slope Issue

Jim reminded everyone that they had discussed the slope issue at their last meeting and were to come to this meeting ready to discuss specifics about potential recommendations to the Commission. He said he would like to complete the discussion by the end of the year if possible.

Karen Smith opened the discussion about the Land of Sky Slope Report. She said she had asked her staff at the Division of Community Assistance for input on their thoughts regarding the report. They developed a spreadsheet indicating tiers of priorities and categories of short and long term impacts and costs. She said she didn't know if that is how the Technical Advisory Council wanted to organize their recommendations from the report, but that is how her staff organized their feedback. DJ Gerken also thought that some recommendations might be actions for regional vs. state approaches. There was general conversation about how to prioritize recommendations. For example, are economic issues more important than public safety? Some thought it seemed that way in the report because economic issues are listed and reported first. DJ said it depends on what issue you are trying to address. Each issue area will have certain priorities. The question is, what issues do the Commissioners want to see addressed? Water quality and public safety may have some common recommendations, but some may not be. Jim Fox mentioned that the report also recommends policy consistency. Which recommendations are most critical to be consistent across the MRC counties? DJ suggested that there should be a review what local ordinances have been passed already to see how they are working. Bill Yarborough said that local government staff needs training about slopes before implementing regulations. Surveyors need education about slopes as well. He emphasized that there may be recommendations that are needed that are not included in the

slope report. Jim Fox said a recommendation about training programs should be included. Andy Brown cautioned the group not to get too bogged down in details. He said he wanted to give the Commission good information to make their own policy recommendations. It is the Technical Advisors job to condense good information. Judy suggested that a spreadsheet format, such as the one Karen brought forward, would be easy to understand and quick to read for Commission members. She reminded them that the recommendations are not just about legislation, but will be about a lot of things including educational needs and voluntary programs. DJ mentioned the need to remember that the Commission has credibility right now and any recommendations they make will have to add and / or preserve that. Decisions should be based on reasoned consideration.

Jim asked for volunteers to work in a small group with Karen to refine the spreadsheet of slope report recommendations prior to the next meeting. He reminded everyone that we're not trying to reinvent the report, just trying to highlight what we think are the most important parts. Several members volunteered to work with Karen and she will coordinate a meeting with them prior to the next full council meeting.

Jim Fox said that he and Rick Wooten have created a draft map of slope percent with county lines. He distributed copies for comment. DJ asked if tax parcel data could be made available. He agreed to provide information about how the data could be used to show the regulations are not unfairly impacting affordable housing. Rick Wooten said the map is helpful because there are a lot of counties that have not been mapped yet, so it shows how much slope is out there. He will provide more detailed information for the counties that have already had detailed landslide hazard mapping completed. It was also agreed that areas of land under public ownership should be identified on the map since they would not be developed and therefore, not impacted significantly by new slope regulations.

Jim then reminded everyone that DJ had electronically circulated a number of local slope ordinances to everyone prior to the meeting. DJ said that Haywood County's ordinance was the most focused on safety issues, requiring an engineered plan, focused on critical slopes and allowing the county to intervene in the event of an imminent slope failure. Buncombe County's ordinance incorporates four of the five categories from the Land of Sky slope report. It also requires an engineer's report, has limits on road corridors on steep slopes regarding the width and height of cuts, limits density, grading, and impervious surface area on slopes, and incorporates viewshed and screening criteria. Polk and Jackson counties have similar slope ordinances. Both focus on conservation subdivision ordinance ties and incentives. DJ said his preferred ordinance would be a combination of the Polk and Buncombe county ordinances.

Aquifer protection in NCDENR is beginning to study the impacts of septic systems on steep slopes. Bill Eaker said he'd also like to recommend that some organization develop a model ordinance. Jim Fox mentioned that is also a way to show how the values associated with the recommendations are inserted into a regulation.

### Discussion of Regional Sustainability Report Card

Jim said that he had been asked to do a presentation about the report card project to the Commission at their meeting later today. Judy said that there was regional interest to expand the report card to include additional counties and we need to specifically identify target audiences, the potential scope, additional data layers, and a useful format for the product. DJ asked if the report card could be used as a standard metric. It's a rich source of data that could answer lots of questions. If we add more data, we could potentially answer even more questions. Jim said that updated 2010 data for many of the metrics is expected very soon. Bill Yarborough asked if other resources such as filled floodplains and agricultural lands could be added to the list of metrics. Jim said that Susan Fox from the US Forest Service, who funded the project, is interested in adding other metrics so the report card could be used by more people. Andy Brown said he thought some of the economic indicators needed to be fleshed out more. Judy mentioned that there is now a vacancy on the Technical Advisory Council because Steve Tedder is retiring and has resigned. The TAC could ask that the vacancy be filled by someone with expertise in economic issues. After extensive discussion about the need for economic expertise on the council, there was consensus that the vacant TAC position should be filled by someone from a regional economic development organization. Judy will pass on that recommendation to the Chairman of the MRC.

### Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Technical Advisory Council will be on December 10 from 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM at the RENCi Engagement Center in Asheville. The agenda will include updates from Karen's work group on the slope recommendation spreadsheet, the next iteration of the draft map, and additional suggestions for report card metrics.

### Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at noon.