

TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE  
WATERSHED ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 5, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL

The Watershed Committee of the Town of Waynesville held a meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 5, 2008, in the Waynesville Town Hall. Members present included Jack Swanner, Bill Skelton, Gordon Small, Pat Maier, Karen Kaufman and Bill Yarborough. Also present were Dr. Peter Bates, representative of Western Carolina University which is under contract with the Town to perform the Forestry Management Plan, Rob Lamm, who is working with Dr. Bates, and Lee Galloway, Town Manager.

Dr. Peter Bates opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. He introduced Jeffrey Schwierjohann, Faunal Diversity Program Supervisor, of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. Mr. Schwierjohann explained the Commission's Wildlife Diversity Program and noted that there were four biologists on the staff. They are particularly interested in the mica mines on the watershed property and have done some extensive studies on the bat population in the mines and on the property. They have placed a monitor in the mines to track the bat movements and have identified over 3000 bats, including one Indiana bat which is on the endangered species list. This area is on the far eastern range of this bat and the Commission staff feels that this particular bat may have been lost from a larger colony.

Mr. Schwierjohann noted that there are two other priority species which have been found on the watershed property, one on the federal list, the long tail shrew, and the other on the State's list of concern, the water shrew. They would like to do more research on species in the watershed and indicated that they had already done considerable research on areas along the Blue Ridge Parkway near the watershed. They have identified some flying squirrels in places where there are evergreens along the Parkway.

Town Manager Galloway encouraged Mr. Schwierjohann and the Wildlife Resources Commission to spend what time they needed in the watershed to do their research. Mr. Schwierjohann indicated that there should not be a lot of surprises in their findings, and he encouraged members of the Advisory Committee to visit the Commission's website showing plants and habitats. He mentioned the National Wildlife Program and noted that there was useful information for the preparation of the Forestry Management Plan.

Dr. Bates presented a proposed agenda for the spring with the goal being the presentation of the Forestry Management Plan to the Town Board at its April 8 meeting. By March 4, he would like to have a preliminary draft of the Plan available for review and comment. This Plan would be discussed by the Watershed Advisory Committee and perhaps some changes made based upon comments received at the next Committee meeting.

Members of the Committee agreed that there should be a public forum at which time information about the proposed plan could be available. Individuals who were instrumental in the development of the Plan could be present to present information and answer questions that the public may have.

The Committee discussed the publicity in advance of the public forum and prior to the presentation to the Town Board on April 8. Dr. Bates mentioned the meetings and conversations which had occurred with the Humphrey Fellows at the University of North Carolina. That group had taken the watershed project on to develop a public information campaign and to help prevent the misinformation that seemed to take a life of its own during the public debate on the conservation easement. Ms. Gulru Azamova, one of the Humphrey Fellows, and Ms. Jewel Counts, a student at Western Carolina, will be working with the Assistant to the Town Manager, Alison Melnikova, to arrange a media campaign this spring. In addition, work will be done to place information about the Plan on the Town's website.

The group agreed that in appearing before Civic Clubs and other organizations, a power point presentation would be helpful. It should include a basic background about the watershed, a discussion of the water quality, some information about plant and animal life found in the watershed and a report on the data that has been collected by Dr. Bates, Rob Lamm and the students working with them. The presentation with time for questions and answers should not last more than twenty to twenty-five minutes. The goal should be to educate people about the watershed by sharing the information that has been found through the development of the Plan.

The group agreed to meet on Tuesday, February 19, at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall to further develop the proposed publicity campaign about the Plan. In the meantime, Dr. Bates will be compiling and distributing a summary of the Public Information Campaign based upon comments from this evening's meeting and input from the Humphrey Fellows and others during meetings in January.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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A. Lee Galloway, Town Manager