

TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
WATERSHED ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 13, 2008– 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL

The Watershed Advisory Committee of the Town of Waynesville held a meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 13, 2008 in the Waynesville Town Hall. Members present included Jack Swanner, Bill Skelton, and Gordon Small. Also present were Dr. Peter Bates and Rob Lamb, representatives of Western Carolina University which is under contract with the Town to perform the Forestry Management Plan, and Alison Melnikova, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Dr. Bates made a PowerPoint slide presentation on the highlights of the draft Forest Stewardship Plan, which had been available online for committee members to review before the meeting. The slides were reviewed the entire meeting, however discussion took place throughout the presentation.

The plan, as presented, has a five year plan for forest management, with recommended treatments in each year. There was discussion over the size of prescribed treatments. Gordon Small said there are efficiencies to be gained by doing small patches but wants someone to check the silvaculture consequences. Dr. Bates pointed out that the easement allows up to 20 acres. Jack Swanner has worked with the Forest Service and worked on sites ranging in size from five acres down to half-acre. The biggest was in the Wayah District and there was some oak they thought would come back. Dr. Bates said that in the late 1990's Roy Taylor did patches of various sizes and it was a waste of time planting; natural regeneration was much more vigorous than what they planted. Gordon Small said that with a five year plan, and the need for annual road creation, it might make more sense to go every three to four years and do more treatments at one time to protect water quality. You have to manage the road system well to protect water quality. Dr. Bates said he and Rob Lamb would consider that suggestion for the next draft of the Plan. Jack Swanner also suggested identifying the roads which should be maintained forever and others which may be turned into a wildlife path.

Jack Swanner asked if timber sales were being planned based on forwarding. He explained that a forwarder resembles a rubber-tired skidder. There is only one forwarder in the area. Dr. Bates has seen someone do a cut with a forwarder and was impressed but it was expensive. Rob Lamb pointed out that there may be a need for a cable system in some places.

The discussion moved to the compartment management, and all members present indicated they liked seeing the plan broken down in this manner. Dr. Bates pointed out that there is always the option of doing nothing, but promoting doing nothing will result

in a continued even-aged forest. Rusty Painter of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina had emailed Dr. Bates to say that forest management is not excluded or precluded in the Forever Wild area, if forest health deems it necessary. Dr. Bates said this would be noncommercial, for example if there was an invasive species.

There was a discussion of crop tree release, where select trees are treated to allow those with more potential to grow. The most effective method is to use chemicals, such as Round-up. Mechanical methods are more expensive and less effective. There was discussion on the use of chemicals and water quality. It cannot be done in every area.

Dr. Bates said he would like the town to do a continuous forest inventory system. The Town should pay for this, and not rely on students. It would require ongoing appropriations.

There was a discussion of the first treatment, scheduled in the plan for 2009. It is logging, but there are other trees coming up there. If done well it would look okay because of the boughs on the ground. There is a market for white pine. If a stand is already dead it would be left for habitat. Gordon Small said the public needs to understand why the white pines need to be removed—the threat of the beetle and how the pines came be planted there originally.

Discussion moved to the treatment in 2011. Jack Swanner pointed out that group selection and cabling is difficult. Helicoptering is easy and not out of the question. But to do it you need to plan a sale with one million board feet. Gordon Small liked the idea of helicoptering as that would satisfy water quality concerns. He said he would send a comment recommending going to every three-four years.

Dr. Bates presented the slide which features the map of road crossings in the watershed. There are 120 road intersections with streams. Jack Swanner said you need to take a good hard look at the roads you have and the roads you'll need to build. Gordon Small said there is erosion on these roads but nothing big. Rob Lamb said he thinks he'll propose classifying these intersections by type, e.g. culvert, ford.

Gordon Small said he would like a shorter version of the PowerPoint to be used by members of the committee to present to community groups and clubs. Dr. Bates will make one available.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by
Assistant to the Town Manager Alison Melnikova