

Landcare

A Place-Based Conservation Partnership for the Future

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**Roundtable on Sustainable Forests National Meeting
Knoxville, Tennessee
February 25-28, 2008**

Geographic Location



Land-of-Sky Regional Council

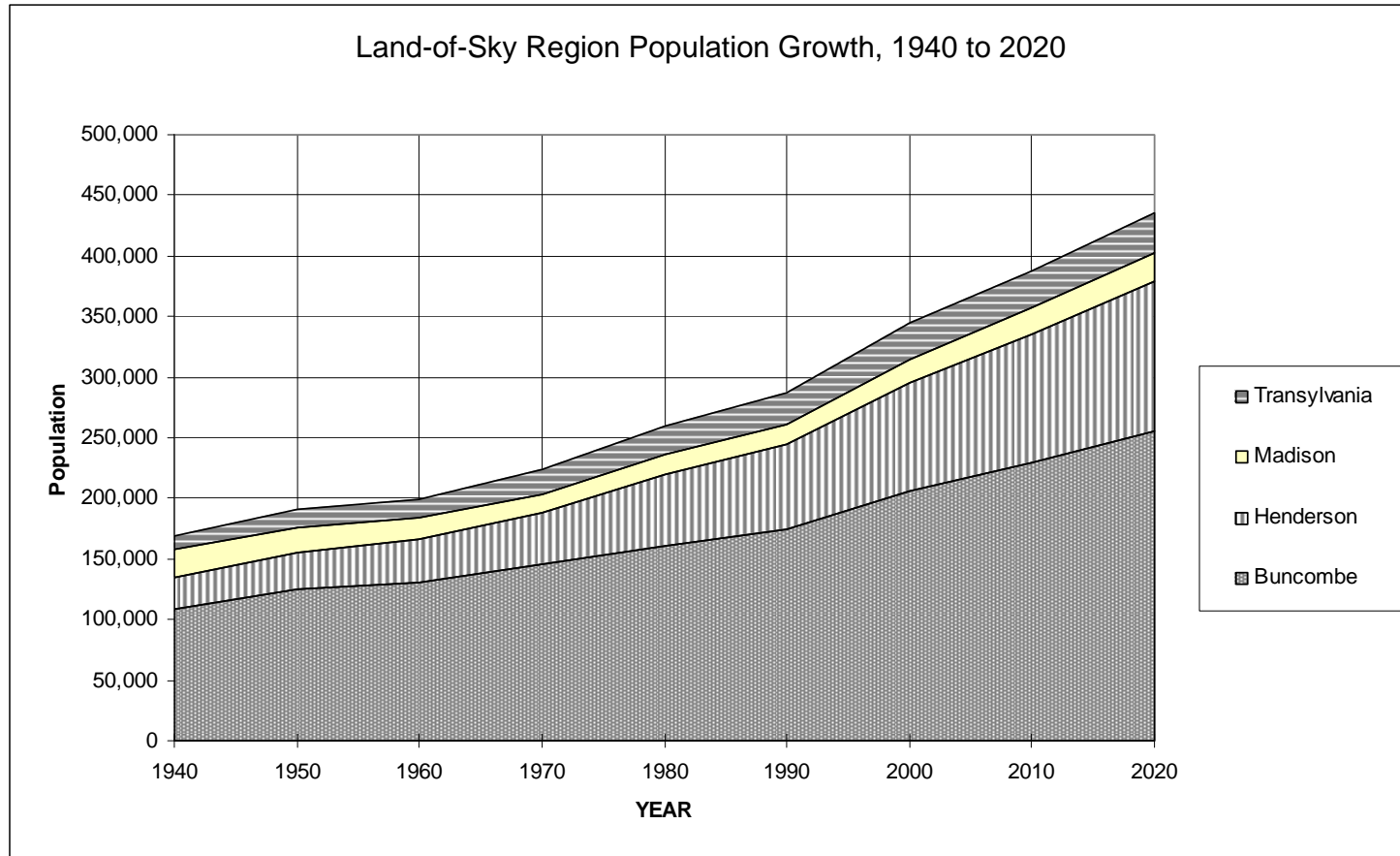
Graphic courtesy of USEPA

Region B, North Carolina – Quick Facts

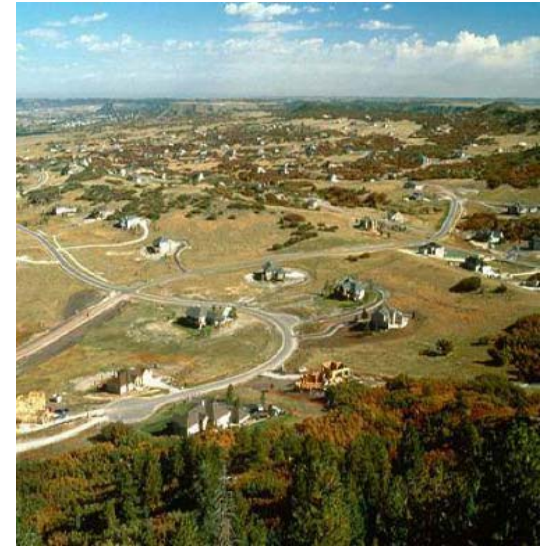
- Total population as of 7/06 = 372,241
- Total square miles = 1,858
- Total percent of land in National Forest = 20%

Region B, North Carolina

- ❑ Region is growing steadily, with no sign of slowing down



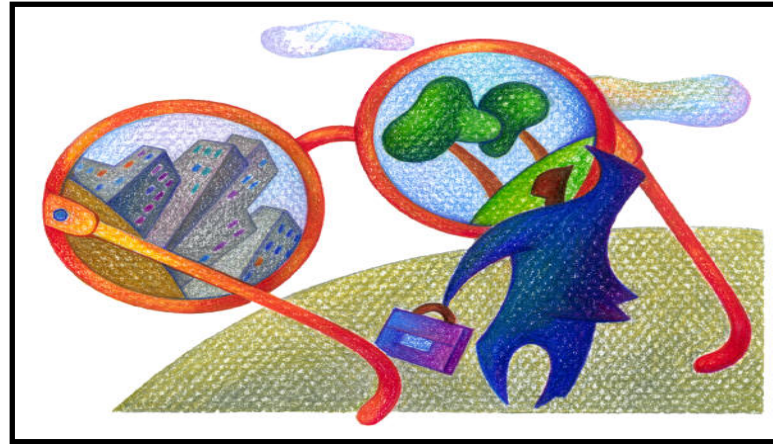
The Challenges of Growing Communities



The Challenges of Growing Communities



Which lands to conserve?



Where to permit development?



Where to construct roads & utilities?

- Rapid development in sensitive areas
- Inadequate development regulations
- Fragmentation of private working lands
- Invasive species
- Urban sprawl – air quality – drought
- Rapidly-escalating housing & land prices



To bring together divergent interests!

Two New Approaches to Address Growth Management Pressures in Western North Carolina



Montreat Parks and Recreation Commission

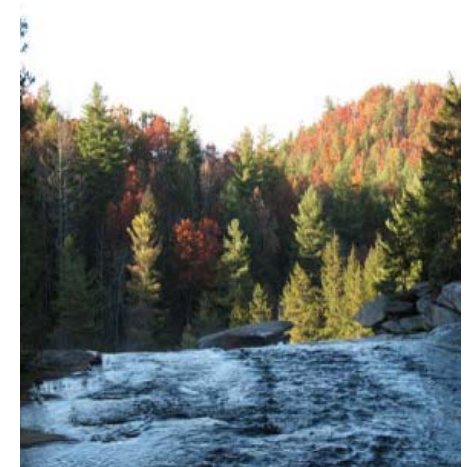
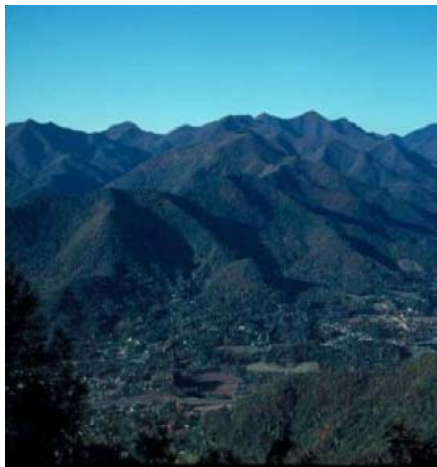


Transylvania County

- Landcare
- Green Infrastructure Planning

Green Infrastructure – What Is It?

“An interconnected network of natural lands and other open spaces that conserves ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations”

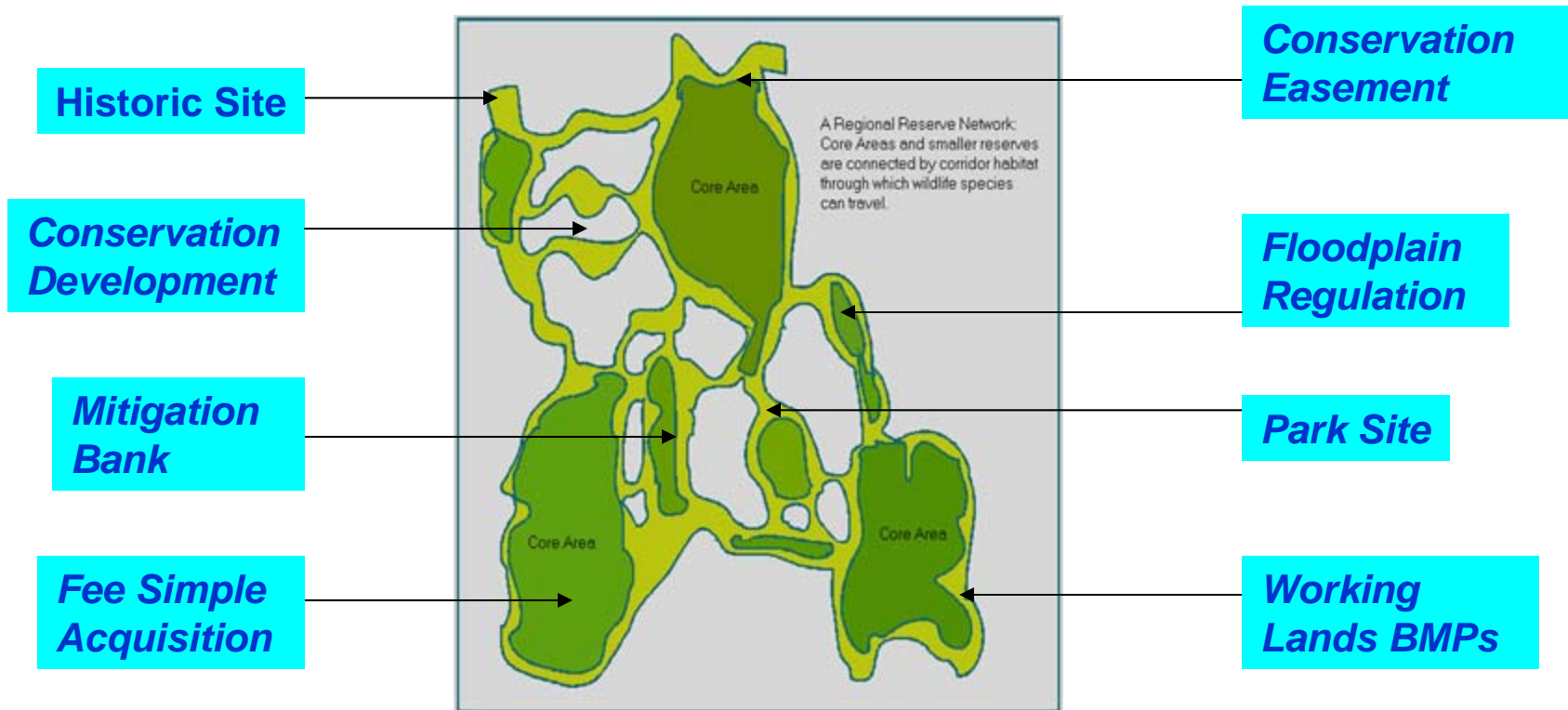


Green Infrastructure Planning – What Is It?

As an adjective: Green Infrastructure planning is a strategic approach to conservation that addresses the ecological, social and economic impacts of sprawl and the accelerated consumption and fragmentation of open land.

Green Infrastructure Conservation Network

Hubs (core areas), links and sites



Linking Lands & Communities Green Infrastructure Initiative

■ Funding to date provided by:

The Community Foundation of
Western North Carolina

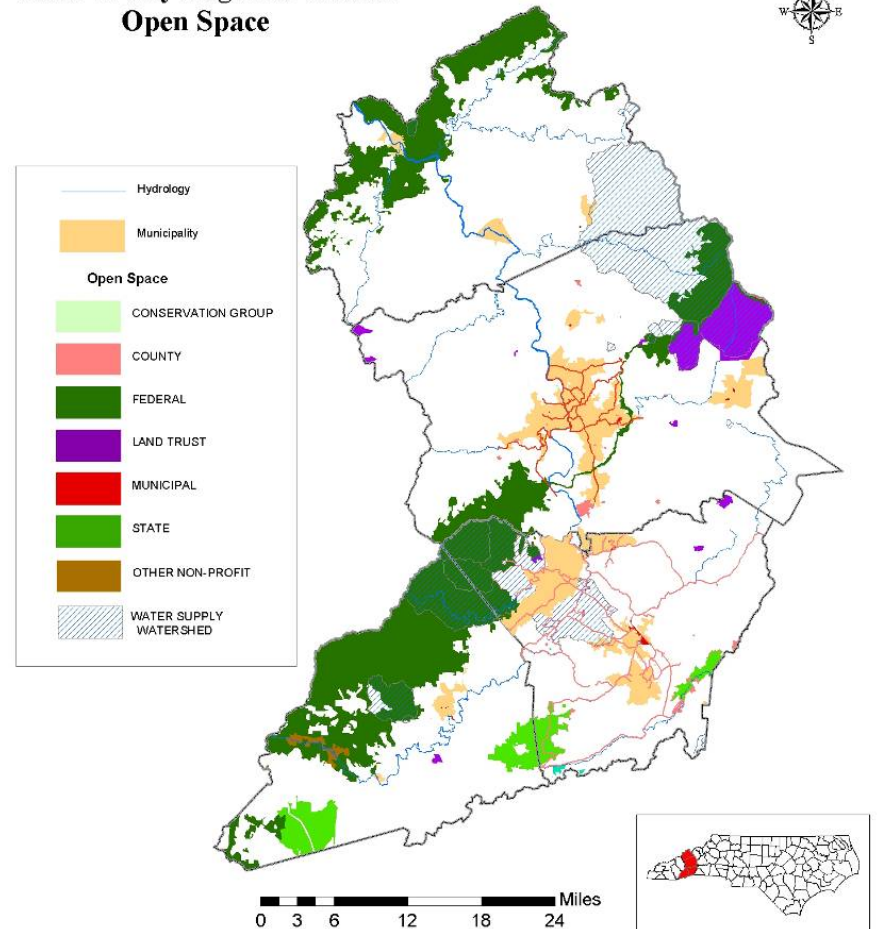
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

■ Overarching goal:

Work with local and regional
interests to design a Green
infrastructure network for a four
county region of WNC, including
Buncombe, Transylvania, Madison,
and Henderson Counties.

■ Pilot for 25-county BRNHA

Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Open Space



Project Partners to Date

- Land-of-Sky Regional Council
- Blue Ridge National Heritage Area
- The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Transylvania County Planning & Economic Development
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
- Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy
- North Carolina Department of Environment & Natural Resources
- North Carolina Division of Tourism
- Blue Ridge Forever Coalition
- The Conservation Fund
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- ECO of Henderson County
- ...and more to come!



Landcare – What is it?



Photos: *Water Quality and Natural Resource Management in the Lower Spring Creek Catchment*, Natural Heritage Trust Project Final Report, Clifton Landcare Inc., Lower Spring Creek Catchment Group, Queensland, Australia, 26 March 2003

A landcare group is a community-based group of volunteers working on conservation projects that contribute to positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Landcare Group/Project Criteria

- Community-based group working on conservation
- Community (or group) identifies projects, with expert help
- Volunteers do the work (may contract out some pieces)
- Working toward the triple bottom line: economic, social & environmental outcomes

LOSRC's Approach to Landcare

- Goal: start a grassroots landcare movement in our region
- Build from the bottom up
- Adhere to a nationally-accepted definition and criteria for landcare
- Recognize three kinds of landcare groups
 - Rural
 - Urban
 - Indigenous

Relationship of Green Infrastructure to Landcare

■ Green Infrastructure:

- About conservation
- Place based
- Strategic
- Science based
- Scalable (site-watershed-landscape scale)
- Engages the whole community

■ Landcare:

- About conservation
- Community based
- Place based
- Science based
- Scalable (site-watershed-landscape scale)
- Voluntary
- Inclusive
- Democratic
- Triple Bottom Line oriented

Relationship of Green Infrastructure to Landcare

- The work of landcare groups can improve, protect and restore our green infrastructure
- Landcare groups could be stakeholders in a regional green infrastructure planning effort (e.g., to represent landowners in a watershed or community)
- Landcare groups might help implement parts of the GI conservation network (e.g., building a greenway link)

Relationship of Green Infrastructure to Landcare

- A landcare group might raise funds to purchase stream buffer conservation easements as part of a GI network
- A classic landcare group could be all the landowners on both sides of a stream that provides a crucial GI link between two GI hubs
- Or it could be a contiguous group of farmers in a small watershed that protect a new GI hub for a particular species of plant or wildlife

Relationship of Green Infrastructure to Landcare

- Landcare and green infrastructure planning can play complementary roles in local and regional conservation planning
- Green infrastructure planning and landcare are useful tools or vehicles for place-based economic development, growth management and conservation
- Regional councils and their member governments could benefit greatly from a national GI and landcare support system that provides:
 - Coordination
 - Training
 - Technical assistance
 - Information sharing (learning network)
 - Recognition
 - Financial support

Landcare: The Key Question

Can landcare add value to conservation in your community for triple bottom line benefits?



Montreat Landcare

Montreat is best known as a national conference center for the Presbyterian Church (USA), for Montreat College and home to Billy Graham.



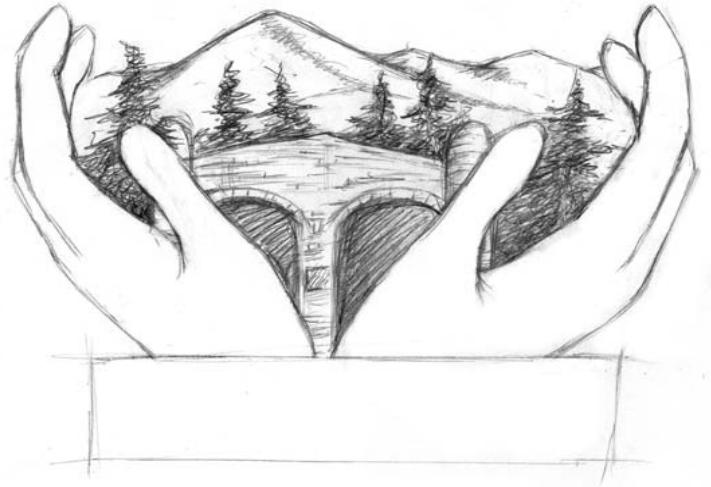
Montreat Landcare

Strong Conservation Landcare-Like History

- Successfully Implemented Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction (ETJ) in the 1980's as a means to protect the Town's ridgelines.
- First Town in North Carolina to be certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation.
- Placed 2,500 acres into a conservation easement and listed in the N.C. Registry of Natural Heritage Areas.
- Reintroduction of the native Brook Trout
- Reintroduction of the American Chestnut

Montreat Landcare

- Landcare Model presented in Spring of 2006
- MOU with Land-of-Sky Regional Council
- Landcare is organizing umbrella for conservation projects in town and surrounding watershed
- LOSRC provides facilitation, networking, fundraising assistance
- Town is fiscal agent for landcare groups



Montreat Landcare

- Landcare Team started up in January 2007 (First in NC)
- Consists of 15-20 residents
- Brainstormed a list of 20 potential projects
 - erosion control
 - removal of invasive plant species
 - environmental education
 - use of electric vehicles



Montreat Landcare

What makes Montreat Landcare work?

- Strong conservation ethic already exists
- Landcare model viewed as adding value to conservation activities
- Landcare viewed as an organizing umbrella rather than another layer of control and bureaucracy
- Strong support by entity leaders without controlling it
- Administrative staff and regional facilitation provide key support services

Montreat Landcare

What Landcare means for the Montreat Valley

- Solid Feel for Landcare Values
- Triple Bottom Line Outcomes
- Opportunities for Collaboration
- Sharing Resources
- Strong Local, Regional and National Support
- Strong Conservation Projects



The Third “Bottom Line”: Economic Development & Landcare

- Growing feedstocks for cellulosic biofuels
- Restoration stewardship on public lands
- Well suited to “green collar” job training (public and private lands)
- Applies to rural and urban settings
- Good examples in SW Virginia (next speaker)

Scale Up by Linking People & Places

Mississippi River Basin



Graphic courtesy of USEPA

Collaborative Support for Landcare Groups is Critical to Scaling Up

- Science / Practice
- Fund Raising
- Marketing
- Coordinating / Facilitating
- Monitoring / Accountability
- Fiscal Assistance
- Training

WNC-SW Virginia Collaboration

- Virginia Tech, New River Land Trust, Land-of-Sky Regional Council
- Grant applications to fund landcare learning network, national training program
- Assistance with Montreat Landcare
- Co-presented at SAMAB conference October 2007 (Landcare, Green Infrastructure)
- National Landcare Workshop Oct 2007
- NARC + NACD + NARC&DC provide key links

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