

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: April 4, 2016

SUBJECT: MountainTrue VWIN Update

PRESENTER: Joan Walker, MountainTrue Campaign Director

ATTACHMENTS: Yes

1. Overview: MountainTrue VWIN Program
2. PowerPoint Presentation

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Joan Walker, MountainTrue, Campaign Director/Southern Regional Office Interim Director, has requested time on today's agenda to present information on the Volunteer Water Information Network (VWIN) Program. The program receives funding from Henderson County, in addition to Hendersonville and other municipalities.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

No Board Action is requested, this item is for information only.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

No motion suggested.



Overview: MountainTrue Volunteer Water Information Network Program

- Approximately 40 volunteers sample 35 sites every month
- We test for nutrients, sediment, conductivity, alkalinity, pH, and heavy metals every month:
 - Ammonia-nitrogen, nitrate/nitrite-nitrogen, orthophosphate, turbidity, total suspended solids, conductivity, alkalinity, and pH.
 - We test for pollutants annually, quarterly, or monthly, depending on the site: copper, zinc, and lead.
- We receive raw monthly data within a few weeks of sampling that is distributed to interested parties and partners.
- We also receive an annual report, usually about one year after the end of the calendar year, which compiles all the data and is distributed to interested parties.
- The VWIN program has created an objective dataset covering nearly two decades, allowing MountainTrue to identify streams facing degradation and obtain financial and political resources to protect streams in Henderson County.
- Examples of historical uses:
 - Our VWIN data showed the Mills River watershed to be degraded due to high inputs of sediment and nutrients. This led to the establishment of the Mills River Partnership in 1998. The Mills River partnership created a strategic plan for working with landowners to install projects reducing nonpoint source pollution.
 - Our VWIN data demonstrated sediment to be a primary and consistent water quality impairment in Henderson County. This provided strong justification for the approval of an Erosion and Sediment Ordinance in Henderson County.
- Examples of current uses:
 - The Mills River Partnership utilizes our data to identify and address issues in the Mills River Watershed. Furthermore, they included our data in their extensive watershed plan they completed in 2015. The Mills River Partnership is instrumental in protecting the water resources (Mills River) that are used for Henderson County and a portion of Buncombe County's drinking water.
 - Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District recently utilized our data to justify a federal Urban Small Watershed Grant they applied for. If the grant is approved, it will fund a project aimed at increased environmental awareness, improved community relations, and water quality data collection in a diverse and low-income area in Hendersonville.



mountaintrue.

Protecting the Places We Share.

Evan Parker, Water Quality Administrator
Joan Walker, Interim Southern Regional Director
April 4th, 2016

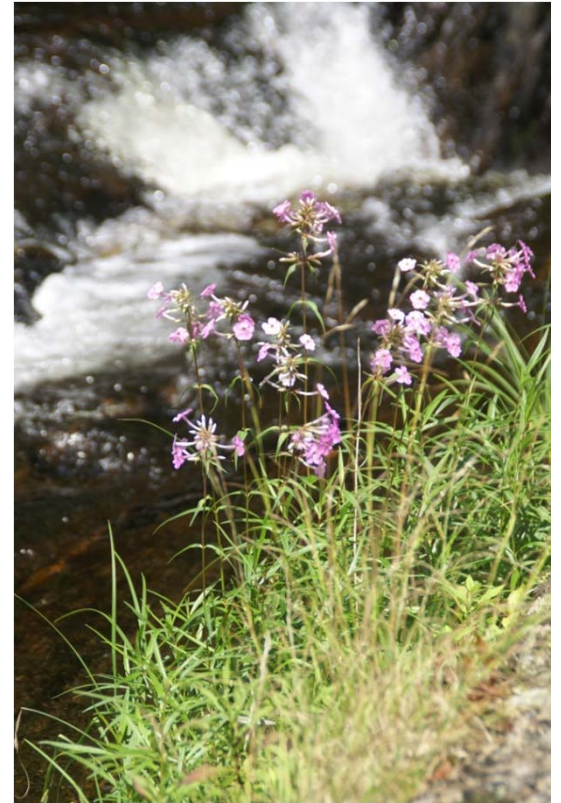
MountainTrue champions resilient forests, clean waters and healthy communities in Western North Carolina.



What we do

Focus on a core set of issues that have *high impact* on the *environmental health* and *long-term prosperity* of our region:

- Advocating sensible land use
- Restoring public forests
- Improving water quality
- Promoting clean energy
- Encouraging civic engagement

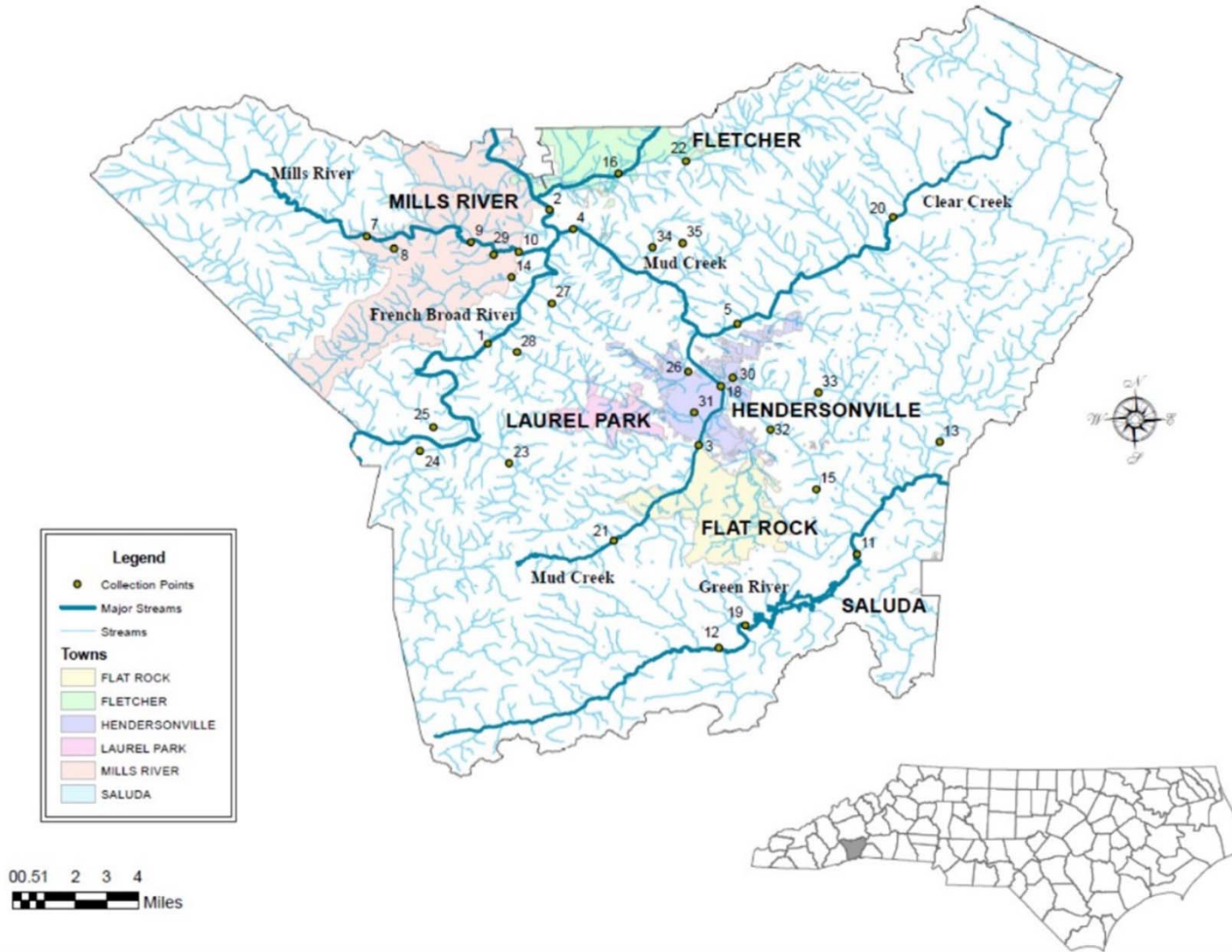


Volunteer Water Information Network (VWIN)

- Volunteer-based water quality monitoring program.
- 40 volunteers test 35 sites in all six Henderson County watersheds.
- Test for several parameters indicating pH, alkalinity, conductivity, nutrients, and sediment.
- 20 years of objective dataset.
- Allows MountainTrue and partners to identify streams facing degradation.
- Available for free to the public, municipalities.
- 2013-2014 VWIN Report.



Map of Henderson County VWIN Monitoring Sites



Mills River: Our Water Source

- Water source for Henderson County and parts of Buncombe County.
- Very good overall water quality, including the lowest nutrient levels in the County.
- The Mills River Partnership (MRP) utilizes VWIN data to monitor the overall water quality in the watershed
 - The MRP is an organization working with farmers on a voluntary basis to protect water resources.



Mills River Partnership



“I am elated to be working with the Mills River Partnership, they have been instrumental in helping me preserve topsoil”
-Kirby Johnson, local farmer



Green River

- The most pristine stream in Henderson County, with some of the lowest sediment levels in the County.
- Help promote Green River as a major destination for kayakers, tubers, fishers, and other recreationalists.



Mud Creek

- Largest watershed in Henderson County, is well monitored with 4 sites on Mud Creek and 10 sites on 8 tributaries of Mud Creek.
- The Mud Creek Watershed continues to be one of the most degraded watersheds in Henderson County.
- MountainTrue is currently developing a watershed management plan for Mud Creek that will expand our current monitoring, log jam removals, trash cleanups, tree planting and more.



Documents

- 2013-2014 Henderson County VWIN Report (electronic and hard copy versions available upon request)
- 2013-2014 Henderson County VWIN Executive Summary
- VWIN Program Overview
- Hendersonville Times-News “Live Staking” article