

Linking Lands and Communities in the Land-of-Sky Region

Creating a framework for conservation and development that respects community values and natural systems

The Regional Conservation and Development Network is

an interconnected network of lands valuable for their ecological systems and services including farmlands, forests, water resources, wildlife habitat, recreation areas – and areas most suited for future growth and development.

Community Open House Events

In the fall of 2009, Land-of-Sky Regional Council and partners from across the region will hold a series of open house events to introduce the Linking Lands and Communities project, share the maps of natural systems that have been developed, and solicit input about community values related to natural areas in the region.

Project Overview

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) is working with individuals, local governments, and organizations across our four-county region to develop a regional network that identifies the location and condition of our natural systems and provides a strategy for maintaining connectivity of these resources. The project is organized into five distinct steps.

1. **Develop broad-based partnerships and recruit community leaders** to participate in the following four steps of the project
2. **Gather data, conduct ecological assessments and develop maps** for key elements of our region's natural systems (which make up our green infrastructure network), including water resources, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, recreation and conservation lands, and cultural resources.
3. **Develop a science-based green infrastructure network for the region** based on the assessments and data collected above.
4. **Create a Regional Network** that helps communities to understand the role of future development and natural disturbance factors (i.e., climate change, invasive species) as it relates to the region's green infrastructure network.
5. **Identify implementation strategies** for the Regional Network and engage partners in these activities.

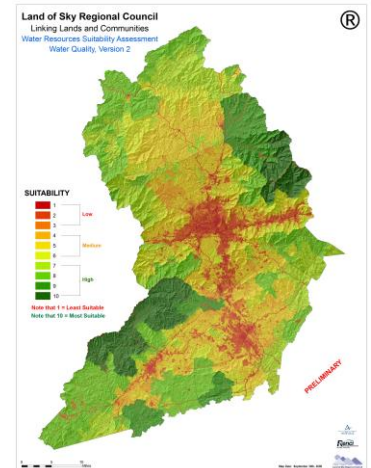
Why an Open House?

Through the efforts of more than 45 partners around the region, the first two steps of the project are nearly completed. We are now ready to finalize our ecological assessments and maps by bringing them to local leaders and the public for an extensive round of review and comment. We also hope to encourage community members and leaders to take active roles in the subsequent phases of the project.

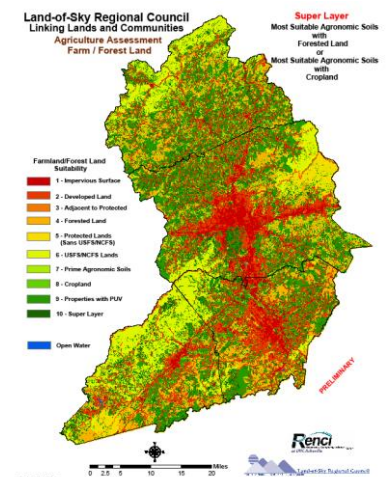
What will I Learn if I Attend?

The Open House events will provide an opportunity for practitioners, government officials and community members to learn about the Linking Lands and Communities Project and the ways that communities benefit from maintaining a network of healthy natural systems in the region. Participants will also gain an understanding of the kinds of products and tools that will be available once the project is complete and how they can use them. Finally, people will have an opportunity to meet other community members and share their values and concerns related to our region's natural systems.

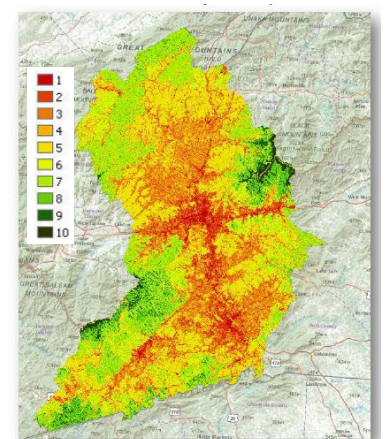
Maps of Natural Systems in the Region



Water Resources



Agricultural Lands



Wildlife Habitat

What do I need to know about the Open House Events?

At each open house location, there will be four primary components:

- 20-minute introductory presentation that describes the Linking Lands and Communities project, the ranked assessments and informational maps, and the importance of working at a regional scale. This short presentation will provide a context for the remainder of the open house and participants are highly encouraged to attend.
- Display area where the maps that describe the location and condition of the region's water resource lands, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, recreation lands, conserved lands and cultural resources will be displayed. Maps of input data layers will also be available. Maps will be available at each station explicitly for mark-up and comment by participants.
- Computer stations that invite participants to look at the maps and data in more detail and explore their applications.
- Feedback area where participants will be asked to complete survey forms and provide more detailed comments on the maps and on the project in general.

Schedule of Open House Events

(please note that some dates and locations have changed)

November 4, 5 at Marshall High Studios in Marshall

Wednesday, November 4, 4 – 8 pm – *Presentations at 4:30, 5:30, and 7:00 pm*

Thursday, November 5, 10 am – 1 pm – *Presentations at 10:30 am, 11:30 am, and 12:15 pm*

November 9, 10 at the Transylvania County Library in Brevard

Monday, November 9, 4 – 8 pm – *Presentations at 4:30, 5:30, and 7:00 pm*

Tuesday, November 10, 10 am – 1 pm – *Presentations at 10:30 am, 11:30 am, and 12:15 pm*

November 19, 20 at Land-of-Sky Regional Council Offices in Asheville

Thursday, November 19, 4 – 8 pm - *Presentations at 4:30, 5:30, and 7:00 pm*

Friday, November 20, 11 am – 2 pm - *Presentations at 11:30 am, 12:15 pm, and 1:00 pm*

Note: Additional presentations will be added in if necessary.

For maps and directions to open house locations, please go to the project website at <http://www.linkinglands.org>