



# Passive Recreation Lands Funding Recommendations

*Presented by*

**Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee**

**October 1, 2024**

Kevin Conrecode, Chair

Matthew Fusco, Vice Chair

Rachael Sawyer, Strategic Partnerships Director



# Open Space Bond

- In November 2022, Buncombe County voters approved a \$30 million general obligation bond with the following goals:
  - Support greenway infrastructure
  - Protect farmland and natural resources while also contributing to the county's goal of conserving 20% of the County's land by 2030
  - Increase access to recreational activities and protect natural resources

**OPEN SPACE BOND:  
GREENWAYS,  
CONSERVATION,  
& RECREATION**



# Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee



Comprised of 7 members appointed by the Parks Greenways & Recreation (PGR) Advisory Board and the Land Conservation Advisory Board (LCAB)

## PGR:

- Ann Babcock
- David Burdette
- Kevin Conrecode
- Lena Richards

## LCAB:

- Bob Gale
- Matt Fusco
- Bob Turner



# Passive Recreation Lands Funding

- Funding for publicly-accessible land, outdoor space, waterbodies, and corridors where passive recreational activities – such as hiking, birding, bicycling, and wildlife viewing – place minimal stress on a site’s resources in a designated area
- These lands provide ecosystem services and are highly compatible with natural resource protection
- Funding is available for both acquisition and improvement projects for passive recreation
- Emphasis on projects that also deliver land conservation and/or greenway components



# Call for Proposals

**JAN 2024**

**Application  
Launch**

**MAR 31, 2024**

**Application  
Deadline**

**APR – SEPT 2024**

**Proposal Review**

**MAY – SEPT 2024**

**Project  
Recommendations**

**OCT 15, 2024**

**Project Awards**

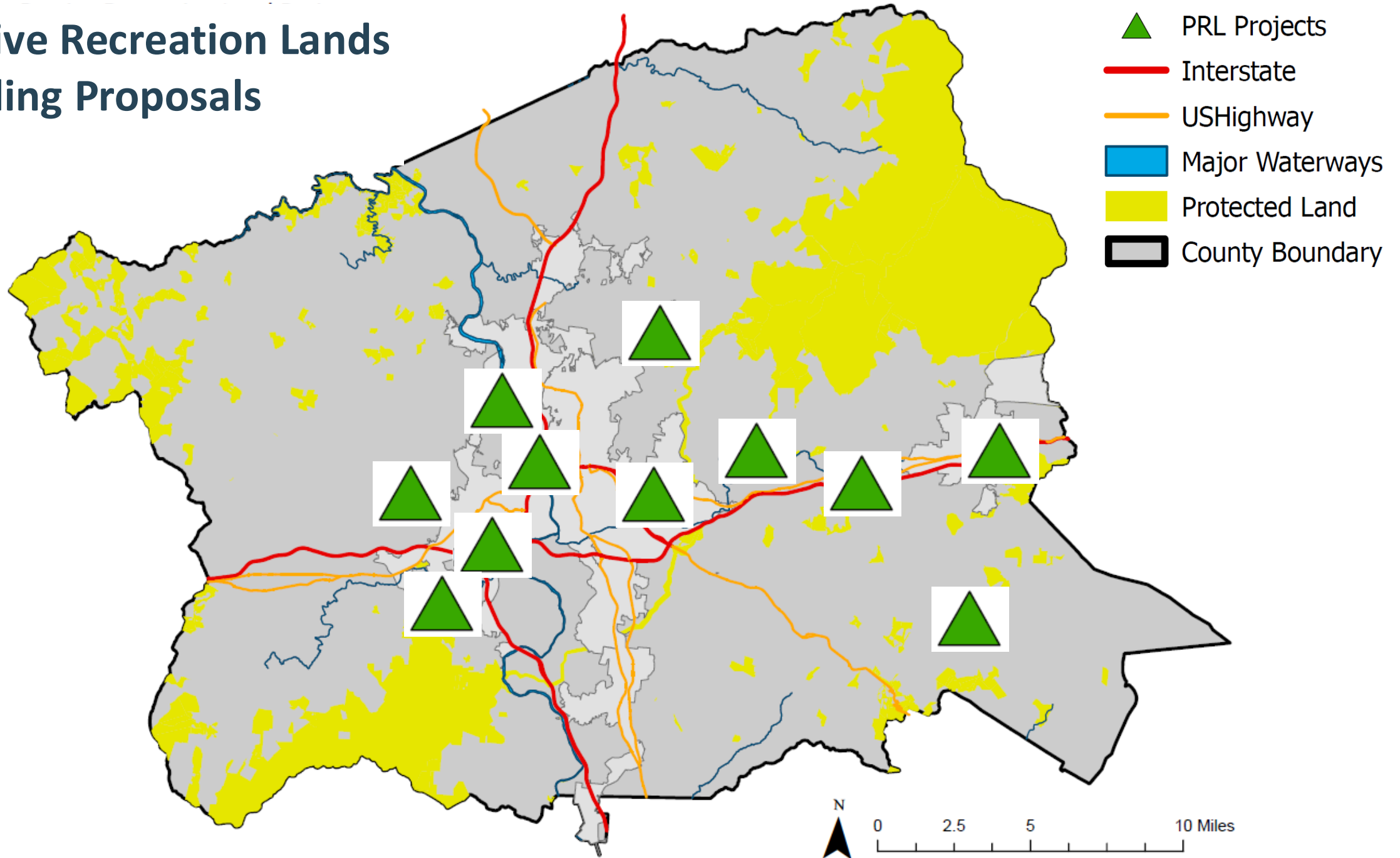


# Proposals Received

- **11** projects
- **3** requests from local government partners + **8** from private entities
- Total request: **\$10,931,182**
- Smallest request: **\$102,182**
- Largest request: **\$3,368,660**
- Median request: **\$756,800**



# Passive Recreation Lands Funding Proposals



# The Project Review Process

## Staff Review

Vets eligibility, reviews legal authority, and assigns scores using standardized, points-based evaluation criteria

## Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee

Digs deeper into scored projects, hears presentations, attends site visits, reviews information, makes recommendations

## Board of Commissioners

Makes final decision regarding project funding





# Evaluation Criteria

## Qualifying Criteria

Answered as a Yes/No Question

- Project Scheduling/Timeline
- Geographic Location
- Long-Term Management & Maintenance Plan

## Weighted Criteria

Scored on a scale

- Conservation and Environmental Impact – 20%
- Feasibility – 20%
- Accessibility – 15%
- Equity – 15%
- Long-Term Management and Maintenance – 10%
- Costs and Leveraged Funding – 10%
- Alignment with County Plans/Needs/Other Priorities – 5%
- Safety – 5%



# Funding Recommendations

Project	Type	Initial Funding Request	Recommended Funding	Applicant
<b>33+/- Acres on Sandhill Road</b>	Acquisition	\$1,633,400	\$1,090,000	Balsam Gardens
<b>Deaverview Mountain</b>	Acquisition	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
<b>Gateway Park</b>	Improvements	\$200,000	\$200,000	Riverlink
<b>Haw Creek Park Greenway</b>	Improvements	\$102,182	\$102,182	Haw Creek Community Association
<b>Hominy Creek Greenway Trail Improvements</b>	Improvements	\$312,834	\$312,834	Asheville Greenworks
<b>Improving Public Access &amp; Use of Lands</b>	Improvements	\$141,580	\$141,580	Warren Wilson College
<b>Ridgecrest Connector</b>	Improvements	\$705,000	\$575,000	Town of Black Mountain
<b>Riverside Park</b>	Improvements	\$3,368,660	\$2,195,231	Town of Woodfin
<b>Worx Community Forest Trail Development</b>	Improvements	\$756,800	\$675,000	Camp Grier
<b>Weaverville Watershed Trails and Wildlife Preserve</b>	Improvements	\$1,072,030	\$0	Town of Weaverville
<b>Woodmen Trailhead and Educational Park</b>	Acquisition & Improvements	\$1,638,950	\$0	Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa (FANS)

# Weaverville Watershed Trails & Wildlife Preserve

## Town of Weaverville

**Recommended Funding: \$0 at this time**

The Town of Weaverville owns a 309 acre watershed along Elk Mountain Scenic Highway that is protected under a conservation easement with the NC Land and Water Fund. This funding would be used to pay for the construction of over 9 miles of trails, parking area creation, and installation of reservoir fencing.

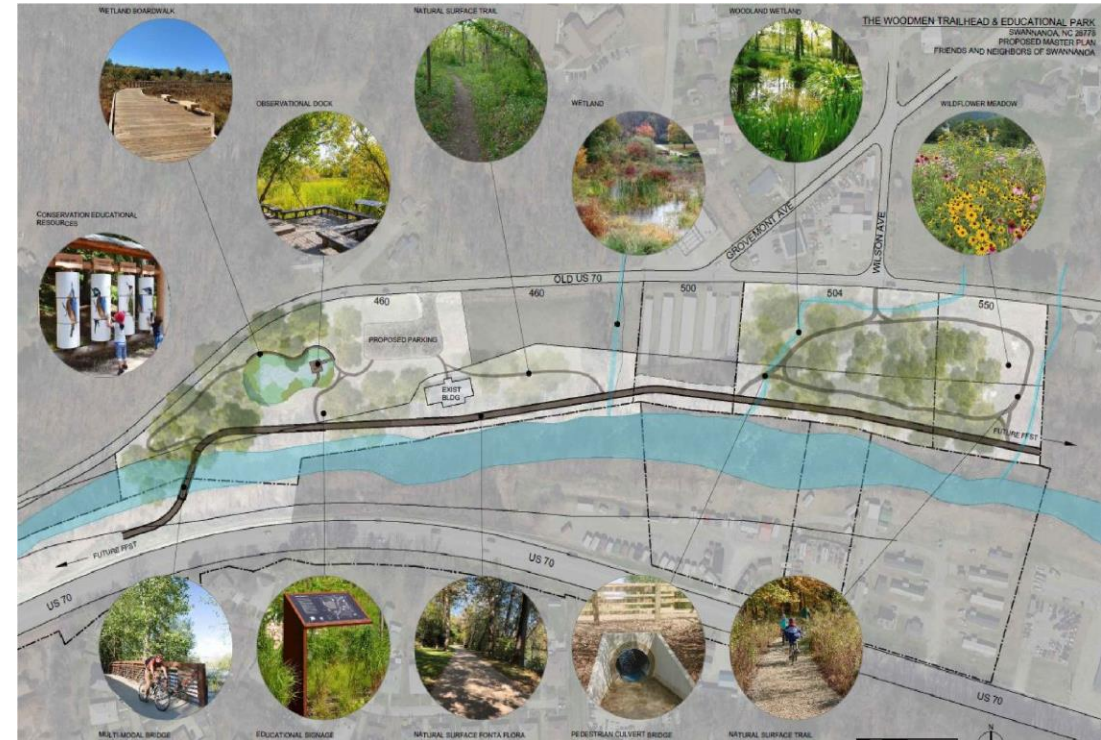


# Woodmen Trailhead & Educational Park

## Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa

**Recommended Funding: \$0 at this time**

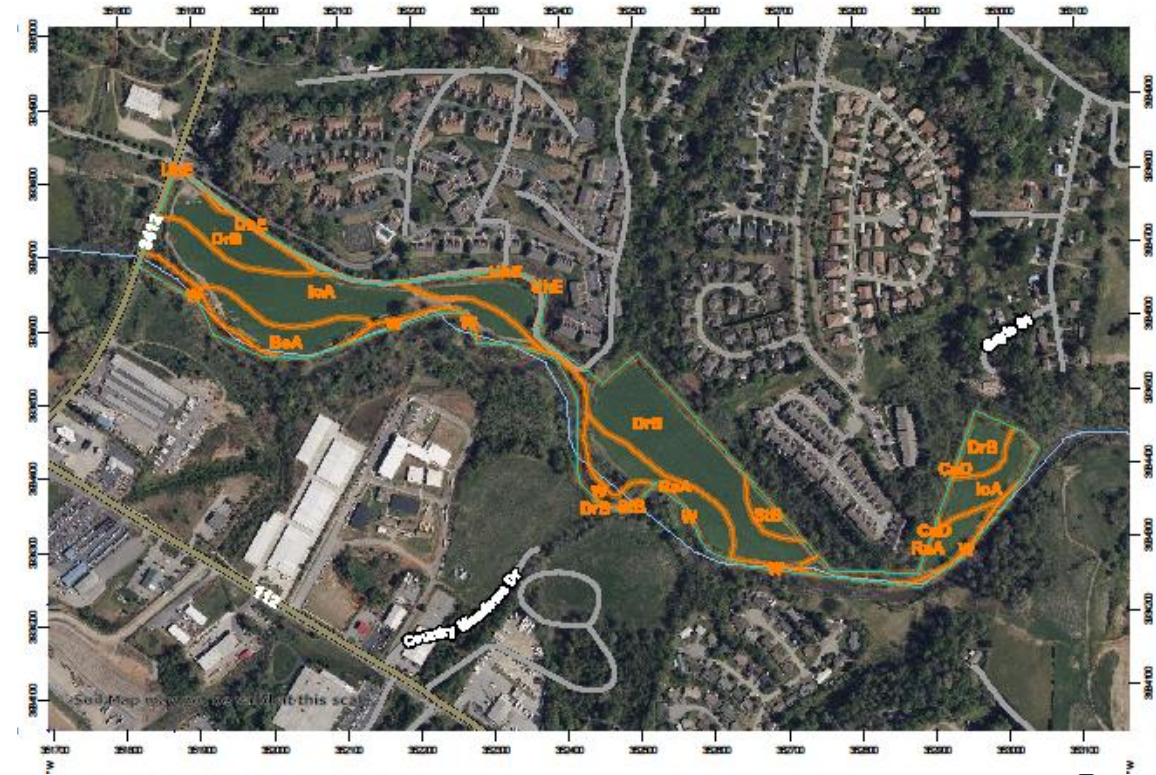
This funding would be used to for the County to purchase land and/or easements along the proposed future route of the Fonta Flora State Trail (FFST). The project would build a riverside park for the residents of Swannanoa and users of the FFST. The park would be in close proximity to Grovemont Park and the newly announced Beacon Village project.



# 33 +/- acres on Sandhill Road Balsam Gardens, LLC

**Recommended Funding: \$1,090,000**

This project proposes the County acquire 33 acres of riparian land consisting of approx. a mile of creek frontage along Hominy Creek. The acquisition would preserve the land as open space, protect sensitive watershed, and provide safe and easy access to nature. The property could be used for an extension of the Enka Heritage Trail.

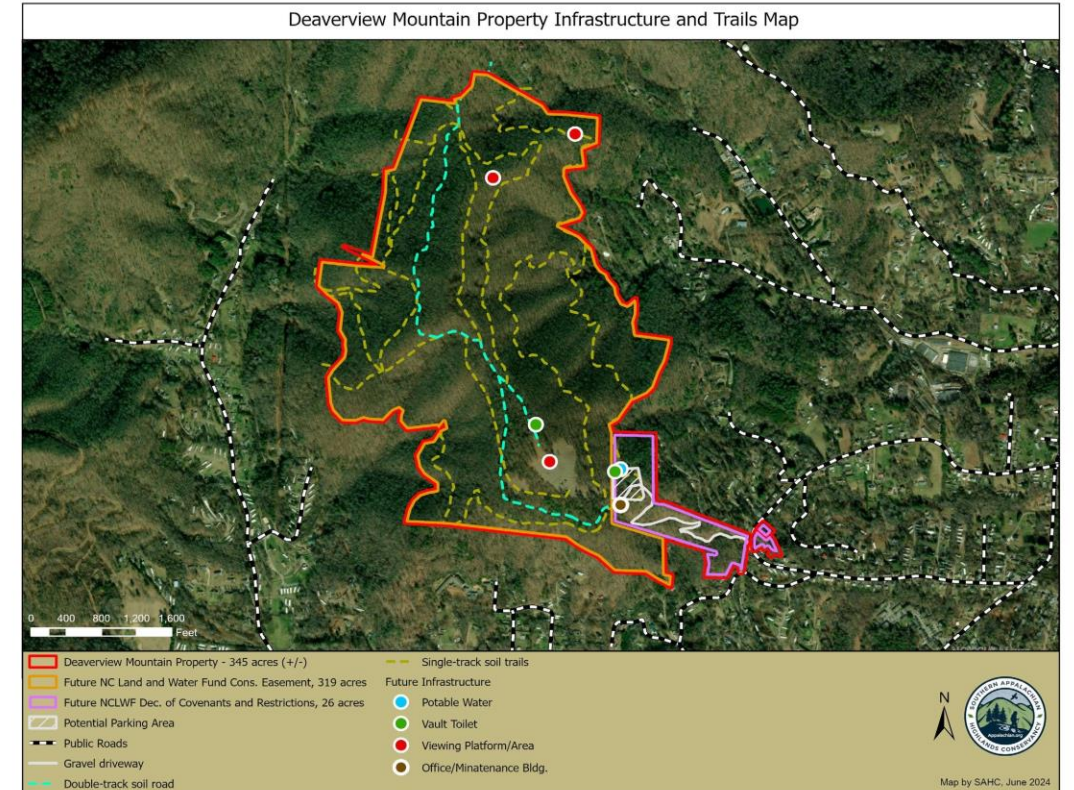


# Deaverview Mountain

## Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

**Recommended Funding: \$1,000,000**

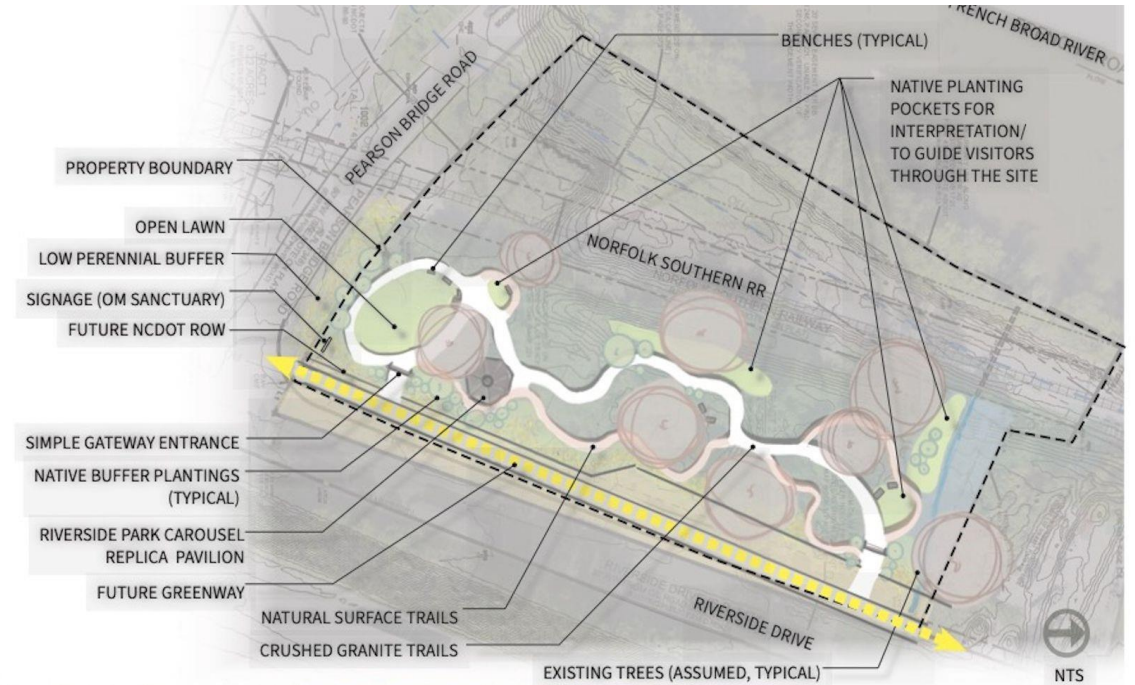
This funding enables SAHC to purchase the 345 acre Deaverview Mountain property. SAHC will transfer the property to Buncombe County for ownership, development and management of a new public park. The park will provide passive outdoor recreation opportunities (hiking, nature viewing, and gathering).



# Gateway Park RiverLink

**Recommended Funding: \$200,000**

This funding will support the creation of partially wooded park in the French Broad River corridor. The park will provide public greenspace along the 2.5 mi. corridor between the River Arts District and Silver-Line Park, prioritizing natural resource protection, habitat preservation, and ecosystem services.



# Haw Creek Park Greenway

## Haw Creek Community Association

**Recommended Funding: \$102,182**

This funding will support the development of a 585-ft nature path in the Haw Creek valley. The path will link the East Asheville Public Library, Haw Creek Park, and the local commercial area with neighborhoods and schools. A private landowner is donating a conservation easement for the extension of the path.



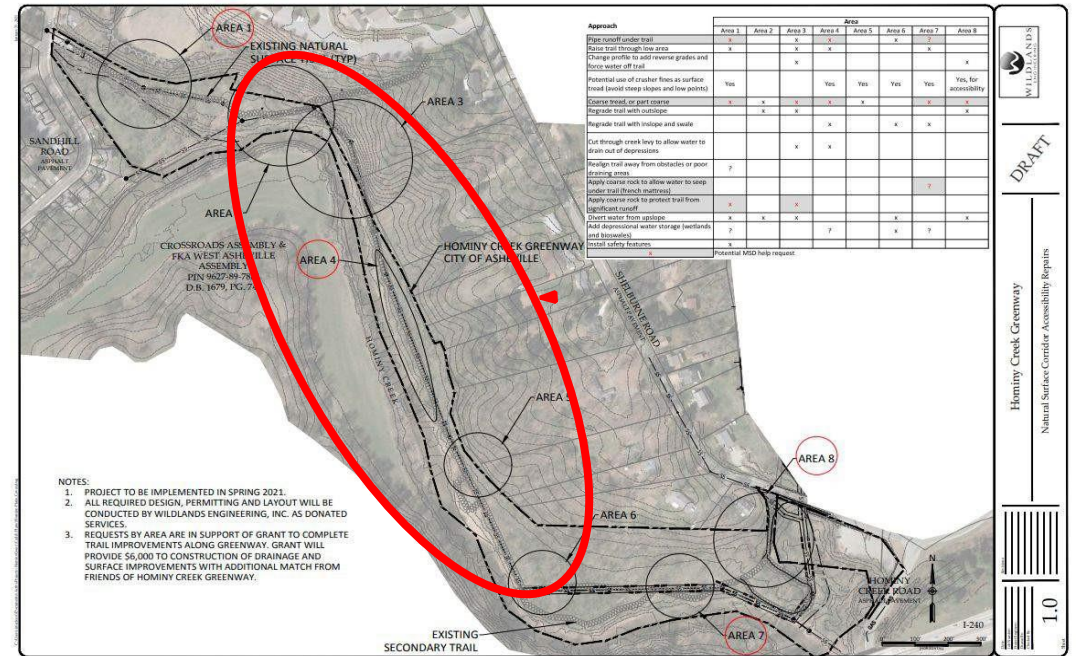


# Hominy Creek Greenway

## Asheville Greenworks/Friends of Hominy Creek

**Recommended Funding: \$312,834**

This funding will support the restoration of .4 miles of a sustainable natural surface trail and the ongoing ecological restoration and maintenance of the 12-acre green space known as the Hominy Creek Greenway, a City of Asheville park. The project will link two recently completed trail projects, expanding access to residents.

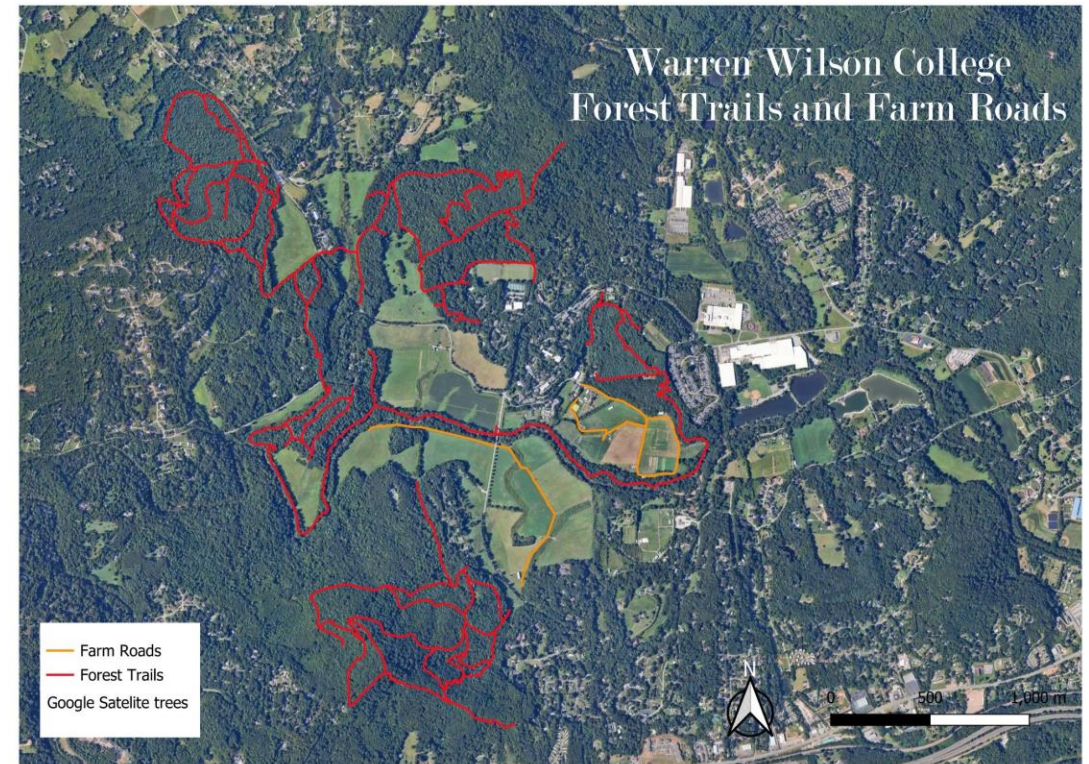


# Improving Public Access & Use of Lands

## Warren Wilson College

### Recommended Funding: \$141,580

This funding will be used to upgrade and improve 17 miles of the College's road and trail system used extensively by the public for passive recreation. This work will improve user safety, access and quality of experience for County residents using College lands for passive recreation activities and allow the College to continue providing these opportunities.



# Ridgecrest Connector Town of Black Mountain

## Recommended Funding: \$575,000

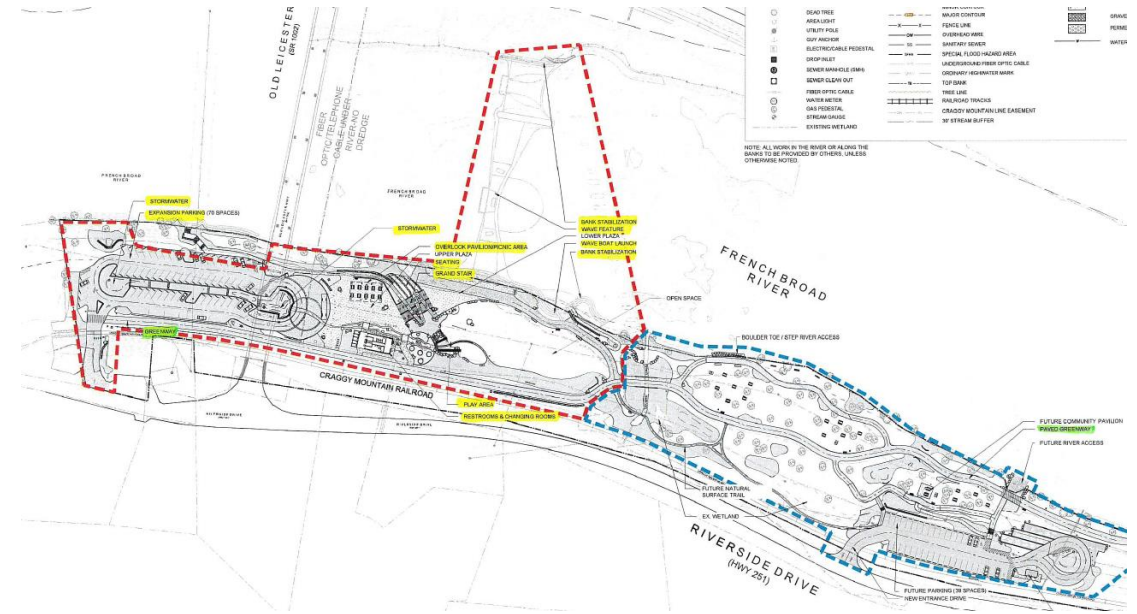
The Ridgecrest Connector is a multi-use path that will serve as a critical connection for the Fonta Flora State Trail. The project is available to the public at all times. The requested bond funding will pay for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of path construction, which will provide passive recreation opportunities and support the Town's economic development.



# Riverside Park Town of Woodfin

**Recommended Funding: \$2,195,231**

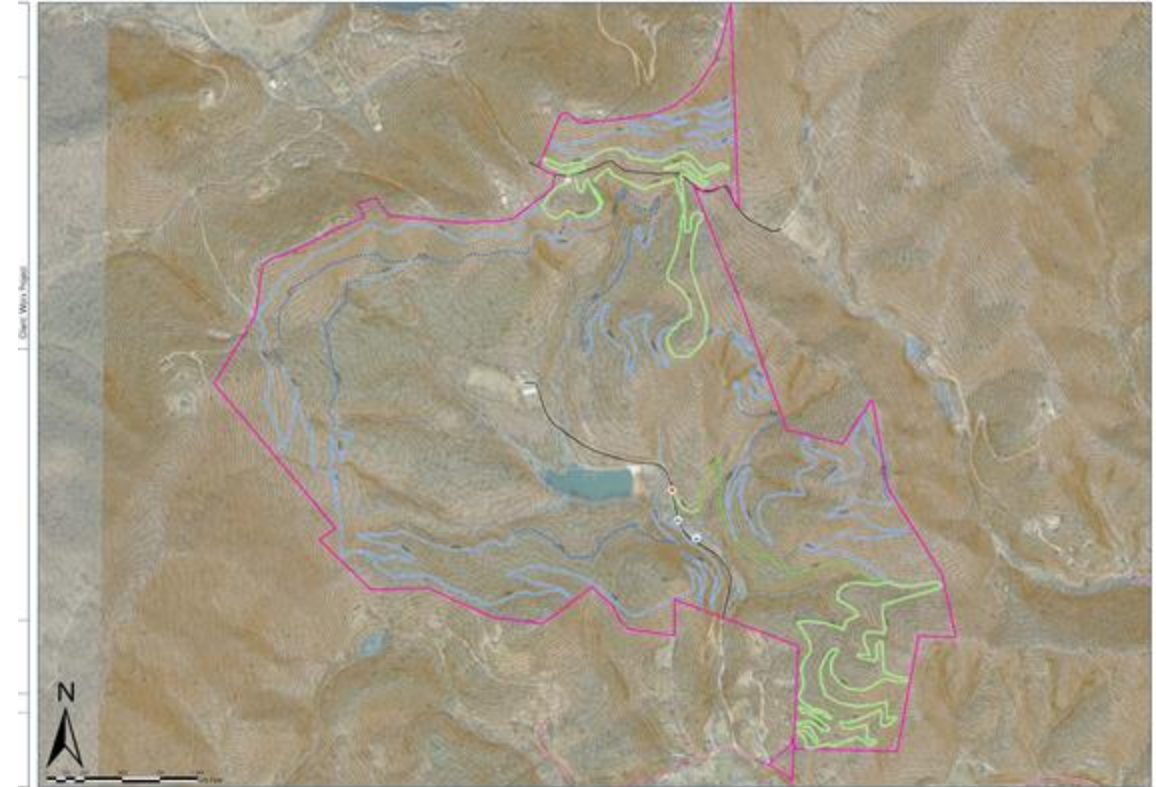
Riverside Park is the centerpiece of the Woodfin Greenway & Blueway, which will establish a regional outdoor recreation destination. This funding would support the improvement of passive recreation infrastructure through the existing park as well as measures to control flooding, preserve water quality and restore native flora.



# Worx Community Forest Trail Development Camp Grier

**Recommended Funding: \$675,000**

The Worx Community Forest is a 225-acre conservation project surrounding a 35-acre learning campus. This funding would be used to develop 11 miles of multi-use natural surface trails designed for a beginner and intermediate hiking and mountain biking user experience.



# Funding Recommendations

These **9** projects are recommended for a total of **\$6,291,827** which would leverage the following impacts:



# Open Space Bond Funds

<b>Authorized Bond Amount</b>	\$30,000,000
<b>Current Board of Commissioners-approved commitments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Woodfin Greenway (\$1,273,250)</li><li>• Parham-Fortner Farm (\$150,000)</li><li>• Lake Eden Preserve (\$250,000)</li><li>• Ferry Road Open Space (\$3,000,000)</li><li>• Deaverview Mountain (\$7,671,764)</li><li>• Okoboji Farm (\$511,500)</li></ul>	\$12,856,514
<b>Anticipated Commitments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enka Heritage Trail (\$2,000,000)</li><li>• Pending Conservation Easements (\$5,045,743)</li></ul>	\$7,045,743
<b>Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee Recommendations</b>	\$6,291,827
<b>Projected Remaining Balance</b>	\$3,805,916



# Future Funding

In addition to approving the 9 projects as recommended, the Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee requests that Commissioners the remaining balance for future Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee recommendation... to possibly include:

- Funding for the dprojects that need additional planning before they are ready for an award
- Other projects identified through a future call for proposals





# Recommendations

The following will come to the Board of Commissioners as a request for board action on October 15, 2024:

- Approve the funding recommendations as proposed
- Reserve the remaining balance for future Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee recommendations

