

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Date: April 15, 2010

Subject: Etowah Horse Shoe Community Plan Implementation – Open Space Plan Discussion

Staff Contact: Parker Sloan, Planner

Attachments:

1. PowerPoint Presentation
2. Staff Memo Regarding Natural Heritage Areas
3. Draft Open Space Plan Map

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

At its March 2010 meeting, the Planning Board discussed forming an Open Space Plan for the Etowah Horse Shoe Planning Area. The Board discussed data sources and methods for identifying priority conservation areas within an open space plan and the locations of desired sidewalk and greenway improvements.

Based on the response and comments of the Planning Board, Staff created a **draft** map showing a proposed open space network along with greenways and sidewalks. All of these maps are open for discussion. Staff requests Planning Board feedback and guidance in moving forward.

Staff requests the Planning Board discuss the following:

- Review the draft map of priority conservation areas
- Strategies for preserving and creating open space (CMLC efforts, incentives, regulations, etc.)
- Review and prioritization of sidewalks and greenways.

Planning Staff would also like to make the Board aware of a presentation by Tom Fanslow, Land Protection Coordinator for the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy that will be given to the Planning Board at their regularly scheduled June 17th meeting. Mr. Fanslow will discuss how the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy works to conserve land in Henderson County and how his agency can be utilized in the Etowah Horse Shoe Planning Area.

Suggested Motion:

No motion suggested.



Etowah-Horse Shoe Open Space Plan



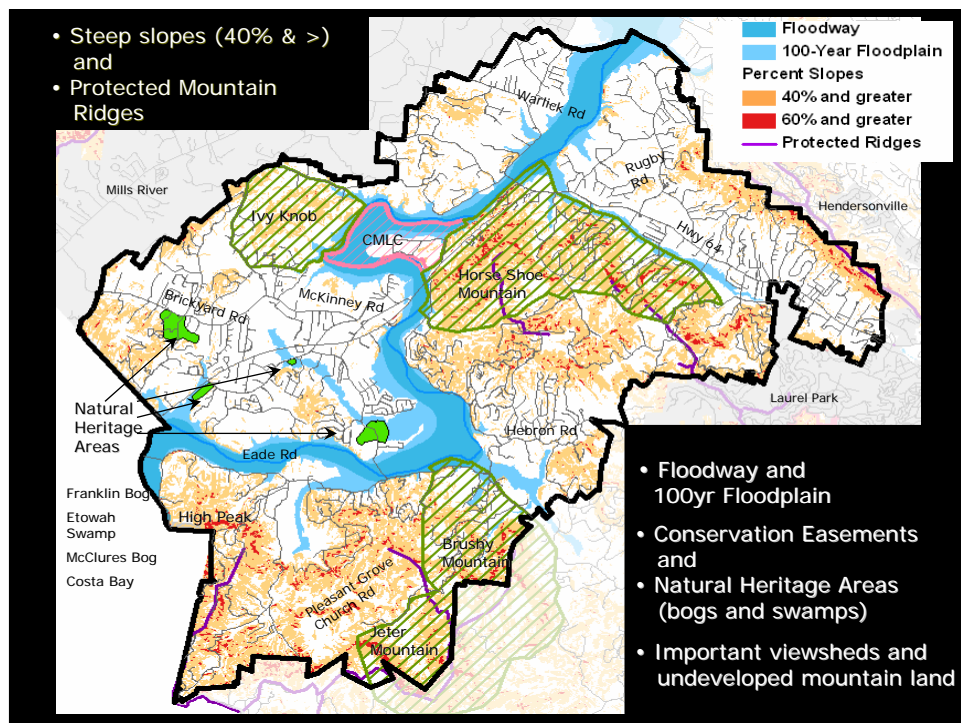
Open Space Priorities

■ Etowah Horse Shoe Recommendations:

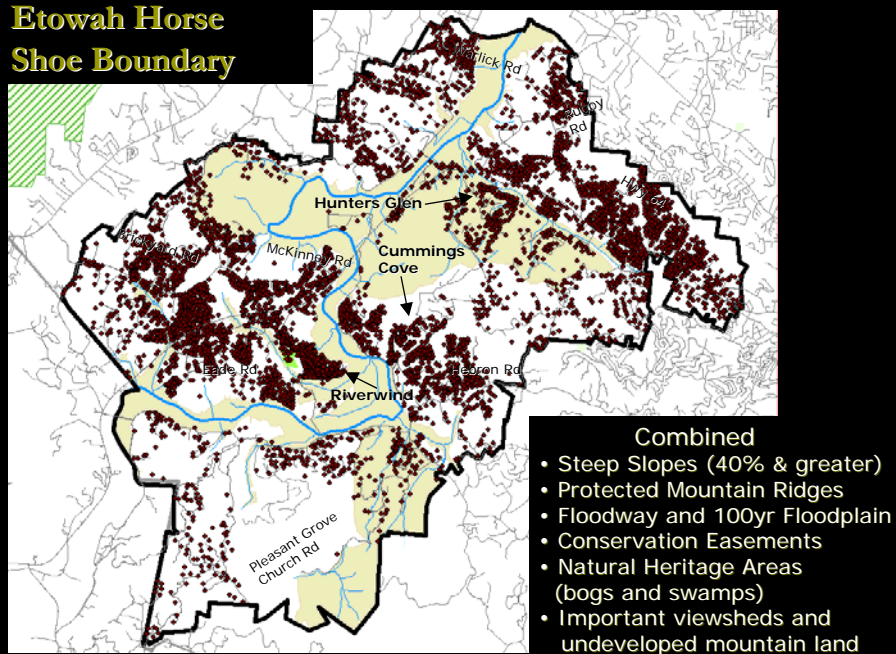
- Develop and adopt an open space plan for the Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities in order to protect wetlands and flood areas, and to further regulate floodplain development
- Protect rural character through open space regulations in the Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities

Priority Conservation Areas (draft)

1. Floodway and 100 year Floodplain
2. Steep Slopes (40% and greater)
3. Public Parks
4. Natural Heritage Areas (swamps & bogs)
5. Potential Greenways
6. Protected Mountain Ridges
7. Existing Conservation Easements (CMLC)
8. Important area viewsheds and undeveloped land that connects additional open space

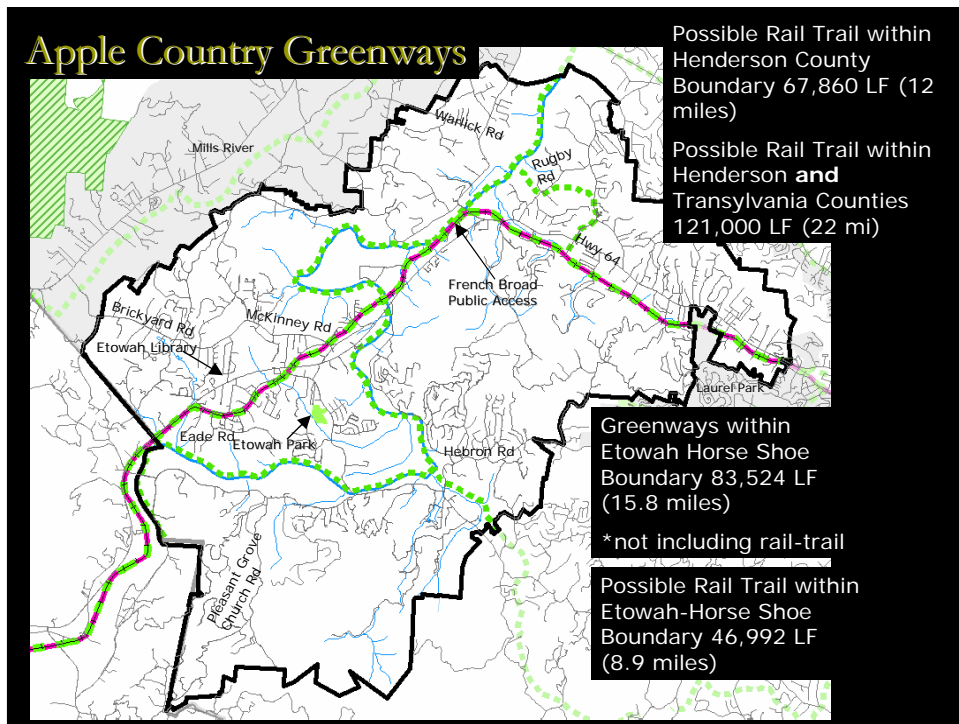


Structures within Etowah Horse Shoe Boundary



Greenways

- ▣ Greenway system already proposed by the Apple Country Greenway Commission
- ▣ Etowah Horse Shoe Recommendations:
 - Consider establishing a greenway between Hendersonville and Brevard on the existing Norfolk Southern railroad line.
 - Consider establishing a planning area service district for EHS to create revenue to support requested recreation improvements

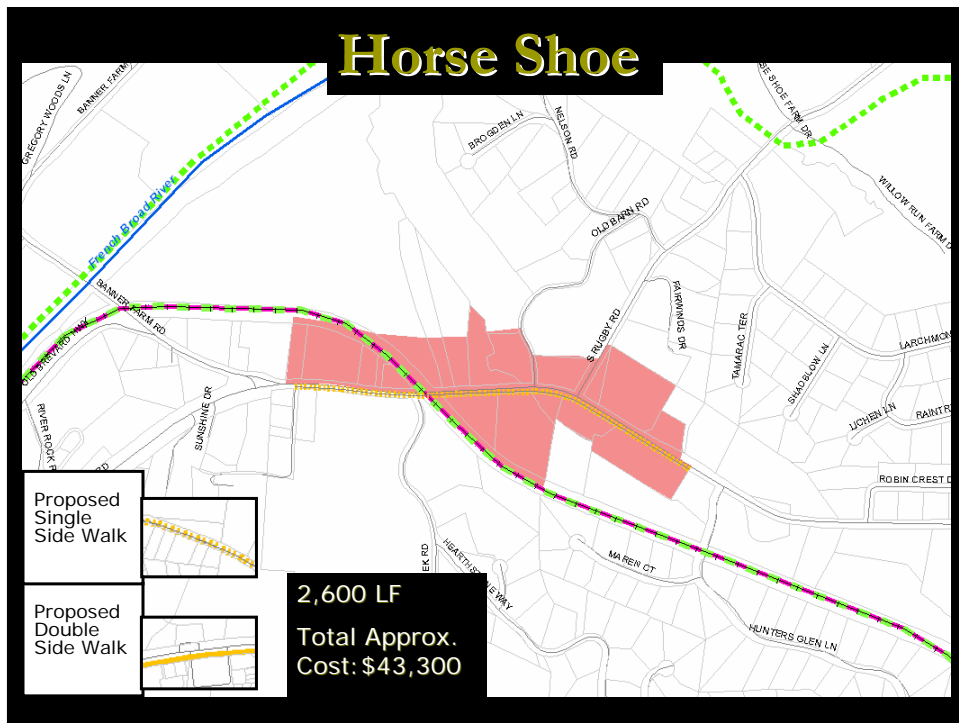
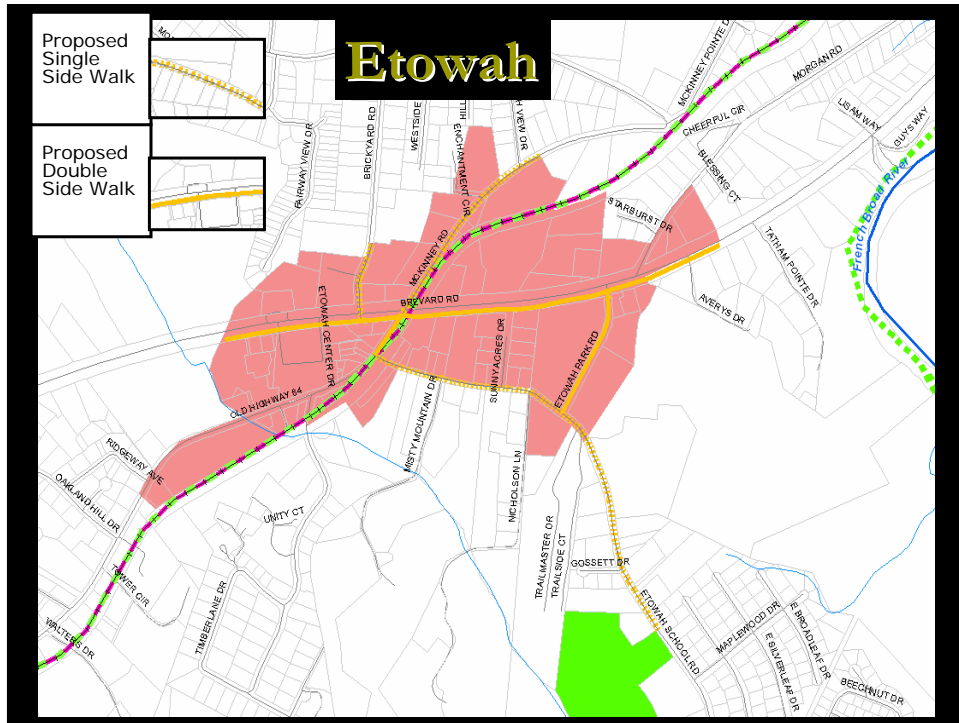


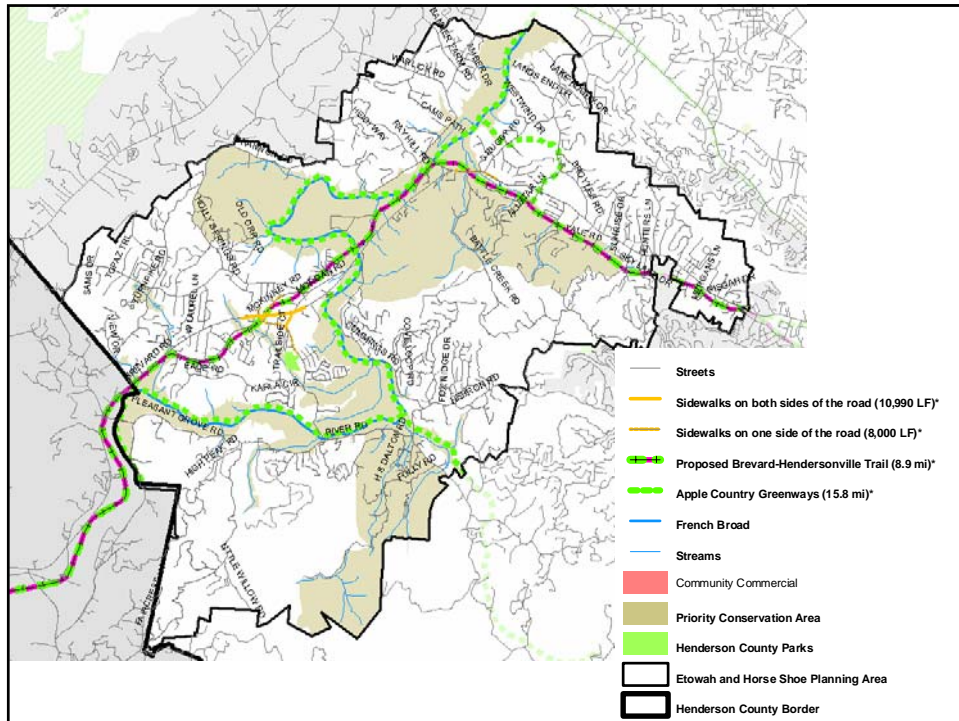
Sidewalks

Etowah Horse Shoe Recommendations:

- Incorporate pedestrian friendly measures in the core of the communities.
- Require sidewalks for all new commercial businesses along any road frontage located in areas zoned commercial.







Development Regulation Ideas

- Transfer of Development Rights legislation for Henderson County (local bill with General Assembly)
- Consider developing regulations that would limit mountaintop and ridge top development
- Support water quality protection and restoration programs in Henderson County. (riparian zones along certain major streams)
- Consider stricter development regulations for areas within a possible open space network (density, design, storm water controls, etc.)

Incentives and Other Ideas

- ❑ Consider developing incentives or tax reductions to current land owners, so they won't sell their land
- ❑ Promote cultural, "eco", and agricultural tourism
- ❑ Preserve or conserve lands using land trusts and conservation easements (Land Acquisition by CMLC and other groups)
- ❑ Land acquisition by individuals or corporations for agricultural or commercial recreation.

*Source: Henderson County 2020 Comprehensive Plan and the Land of Sky Sense of Place Project

Discussion Points

- ❑ Review draft map of priority conservation areas
- ❑ Strategies for preserving and creating open space (CMLC efforts, incentives, regulations, etc.)
- ❑ Review and prioritization of sidewalks and greenways.

HENDERSON COUNTY
Planning Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Henderson County Planning Board
FROM: Parker Sloan, Planner
DATE: April 1, 2010
SUBJECT: Etowah Horse Shoe Planning Areas Significant Natural Heritage Areas

A Significant Natural Heritage Area is an area of land or water identified by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program as being important for conservation of North Carolinas biodiversity. Natural Heritage Areas contain one or more natural heritage elements - high-quality or rare natural communities, rare species, or special animal habitats. The Natural Heritage Program documents the status and distribution of the rarest plants and animals by working closely with experts from across the state and in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Plant Conservation Program of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. The Natural Heritage Program has identified more than 2,000 Significant Natural Heritage Areas across the state.

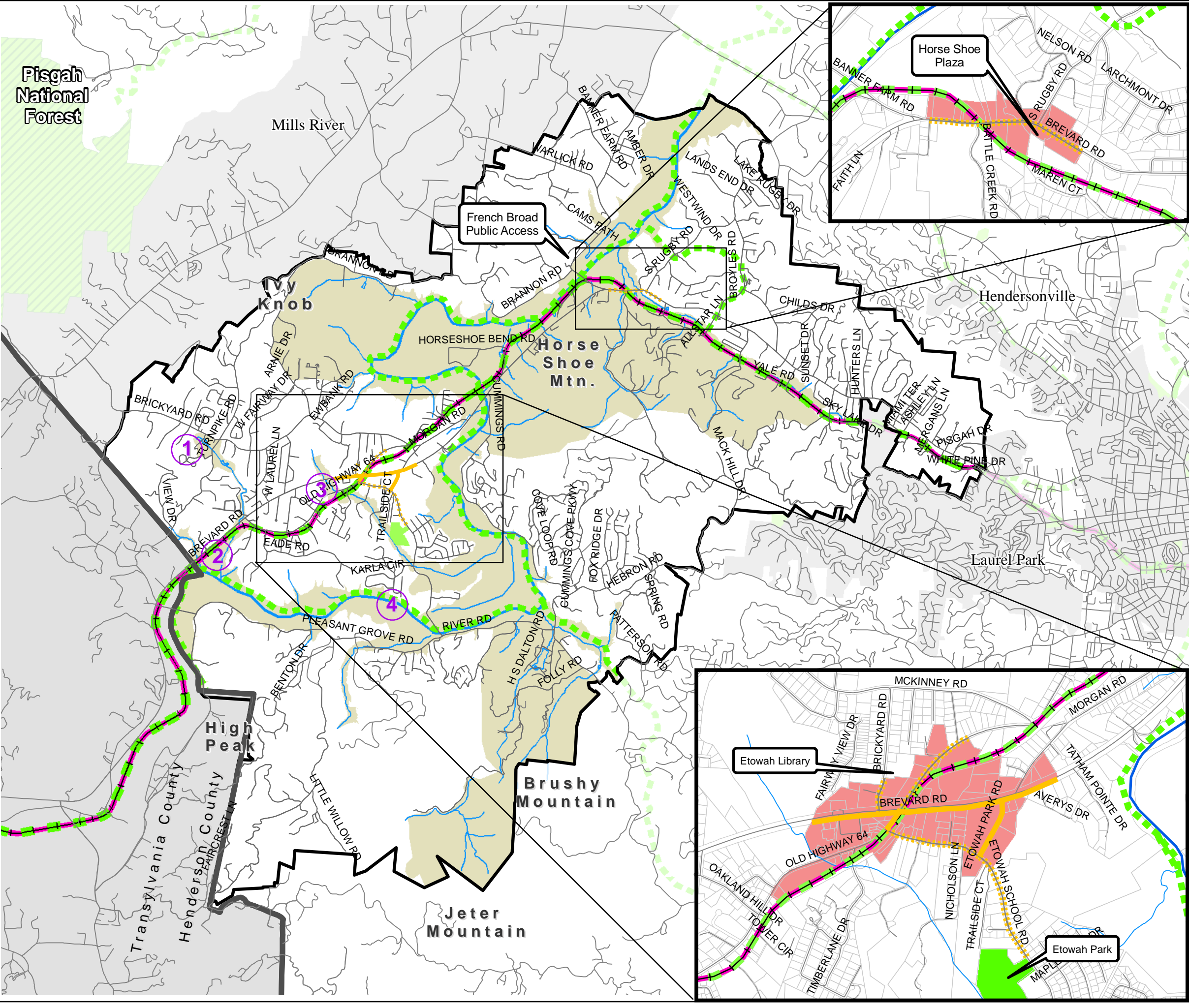
According to the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (CMLC) their primary goal for the Etowah Horse Shoe area is to help preserve existing bogs and wetlands and other riparian zones along the French Broad.

In the Etowah and Horse Shoe Planning Area there are four bogs or wetlands identified as Significant Natural Heritage Areas. They are the Franklin Bog, McClures Bog, Costa Bog, and Etowah Swamp (See Attached Map).

The Franklin Bog, near the intersection of Turnpike Road and Brickyard Road, is partially owned by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the remainder is privately owned. The Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, working with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission, is currently working on obtaining the remaining bog lands.

The McClures Bog on Etowah School Road near the intersection with Drexel Road is owned and intensively maintained by the Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy, concerned about poaching and damage to species, tries to limit visitation to and advertisement of the site. With grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the Nature Conservancy is restoring the bogs habitat by removing non native species.

The remaining two bogs identified as significant Natural Heritage Areas, the Costa Bog and the Etowah Swamp, are owned privately and are not being maintained or preserved by any professional agency at this time.



Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities Planning Area

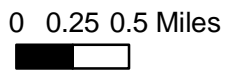
Priority Open Space Map

- Streets
- Sidewalks on both sides of the road (10,990 LF)*
- Sidewalks on one side of the road (8,000 LF)*
- Proposed Brevard-Hendersonville Trail (8.9 mi)*
- Apple Country Greenways (15.8 mi)*
- French Broad
- Streams
- Community Commercial
- Priority Conservation Area
- Henderson County Parks
- Etowah and Horse Shoe Planning Area
- Henderson County Border

- 1 Numbered Bogs and Swamps
- 1. Franklin Bog, owner NCDOT and private landowners
 - 2. Costa Bog, private owners
 - 3. Etowah Swamp, private owners
 - 4. McClures Bog, owner Nature Conservancy

Total Acres in Etowah Horse Shoe Planning Area = 19,380 ac
Total Priority Conservation Area = 6,787 ac (35% of Planning Area)
CMLC lands = 360 ac (5% of Priority Conservation Area)
Viewsheds = 3,594 ac (52% of Priority Conservation Area)
Floodplain = 2,784 ac (41% of Priority Conservation Area)
60% slope or greater = 157 ac (2% of Priority Conservation Area)
40% slope or greater = 3,896 ac (57% of Priority Conservation Area)

* Associated linear footage or mileage references the portion within the Etowah Horse Shoe Community Planning Boundary and NOT all of Henderson County



This map is prepared from the inventory of real property found within this jurisdiction, and is compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this map, are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification of the information contained on this map. The County and mapping company assume no legal responsibility for the information contained on this map.