

MINUTES

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF HENDERSON

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SEPTEMBER 7, 1994

The Henderson County Board of Commissioners met for a continuation of the regularly scheduled meeting of September 6, 1994. The meeting was held at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room of the Henderson County Office Building.

Those present were: Chairman Vollie G. Good, Vice-Chair Renee Kumor, Commissioner Hugh D. Randall, Commissioner William McKay, County Manager David F. Thompson, Assistant County Manager David E. Nicholson, Staff Attorney Angela M. Skerrett, Planning Director Matt Matteson, and Clerk to the Board Elizabeth W. Corn.

Absent was Commissioner J. Michael Edney.

Also present were Bill Eaker of Land Of Sky Council of Governments and Melinda McWilliams of the National Forest Service/Asheville Office.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Good called the meeting back to order and welcomed all in attendance. He stated that this is the continuation of last evening's meeting for the purpose of completing the business listed on the agenda.

WORK SESSION ON WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY REPORT (Mills River)

Matt Matteson asked if everyone had a copy of the Study Report. He reminded the Board that the deadline for comments to the National Forest Service is September 30, 1994.

David Thompson reminded the Board that the deadline for response to the Land Of Sky Council of Governments is September 21, 1994.

Ms. McWilliams stated that regulations require them to study a one quarter mile corridor on each side of the river. If the river becomes designated, the designation is for bank to bank. After designation the Forest Service would be required to do a management plan for the river and actual boundaries would be established at that time with full public participation.

One of the main objectives of the Wild and Scenic Designation would be to prevent any impoundments on the river. Another objective is

September 7, 1994

Page 2

to protect the free flowing condition of the waters. This study encompasses 34.8 miles with 60% of the land being Federal owned.

### Alternatives

Four alternatives were developed to address the public issues and meet the requirements of wild and scenic river studies:

Alternative A, the no action alternative, addresses a recommendation of nondesignation for the entire 34.8 miles.

Alternative B (preferred) considers designation of the entire 34.8 miles with 20.1 miles of South Fork Mills classified wild. The remaining 5.3 miles of South Fork and all of North Fork (5.9 miles) and Mills Rivers (3.5 miles) would be classified recreational.

Alternative C considers designation of the entire 34.8 miles, with an alternative classification of scenic for the 3.3 mile segment of South Fork from Pigeon Branch to Soapstone Ridge that is within the congressionally designated Cradle of Forestry. The other 16.8 miles of South Fork on national forest lands would be classified wild. The remainder of South Fork and all of North Fork and Mills Rivers would be classified recreational.

Alternative D considers designation of South Fork and North Fork from their headwaters downstream to the national forest boundary. South Fork would be classified wild and North Fork would be classified recreational. The remainder of South Fork and North Fork and all of Mills River would not be designated. This would exclude most private lands from designation.

The National Forest Service recommended adoption of Alternative "B".

### Potential Hydropower Use, Flood Control, and Municipal Water Supply

The Mills River watershed currently provides water for the municipalities of Hendersonville, Laurel Park and Saluda (Polk County) and a significant portion of Henderson County. A reservoir and pipeline is located on North Fork and a water intake is located on South Fork outside the study corridor near the N.C. Highway 191 bridge. It is a reasonable assumption that these municipalities will need increased water supply in the future. Mills River would be an alternative as well as the French Broad River.

September 7, 1994

Page 3

The Asheville-Buncombe Water Supply Study in 1990 projected the demand for municipal/county water to increase by 5 million gallons per day (mgd) over the next 20 years and a total of 17 mgd over the next 50 years. All of the large potential supply sources (greater than 10 mgd) identified are located on the National Forest, except the French Broad River. (The French Broad is a viable option although Asheville voters defeated a bond referendum in 1989 to construct a drinking water supply intake on the French Broad.) All of these sources would require dams and reservoirs to be constructed. The largest potential source identified by this study is a large dam and reservoir on Mills River at the confluence of North Fork and South Fork. This source is projected to yield 40 mgd and would probably be considered a regional supply serving both Asheville/Buncombe County and Hendersonville/Henderson County. Separate reservoirs on North Fork and South Fork within the National Forest with a projected yield of 20 mgd and 18 mgd respectively were also considered. The headwaters for South Fork in the Pink Beds was evaluated as a potential source, but was dropped from further consideration. The selected action does not provide for the development of any new water sources at this time. However, current actions to increase the Asheville/Buncombe water supply will not meet the long-term projected water demands, so it is reasonable to assume that the Mills River System will continue to be considered an alternative for future municipal water supply.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposed dams on the Mills River and its tributaries in 1942 and again in 1971 for flood control, recreation and future water supply. Public opposition, primarily in Henderson and Transylvania Counties, defeated the proposals each time. TVA no longer has plans to build any reservoirs on the Mills River System.

No hydropower projects have been proposed for the Mills River System in the past and none are reasonably foreseeable in the future.

There was very much discussion. The Board of Commissioners meets again on September 21. If the Board cannot make a consensus decision at that time regarding wild and scenic river designation, it was stated that an extension could be granted.

As there was no further business, Chairman Good adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

September 7, 1994

Page 4

ATTEST:

Elizabeth W. Corn  
Elizabeth W. Corn, Clerk

Vollie H. Good  
Vollie G. Good, Chairman