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# THE CONSERVATION CRIER

*J-MCA ~ working for sustainable communities, forests and water resources*



*At JMCA's annual meeting in December, out-going Chair Cynthia Strain gave the following speech. It conveys her deep love and passion for the environmental health of our world and why she has spent so many years dedicated to protecting and preserving our very special place.*

Have you ever sat under a tree and become aware that you were breathing in oxygen that the tree had released, while the tree is utilizing the carbon dioxide that you were exhaling? It is a wonderful insight, and when I experienced it I felt a profound shift in my understanding of our connection to trees as well as all life on earth. Revelations such as that have formed my environmental activism for over 20 years. The same sorts of insights have inspired many of you to work for changes in areas that you care about too.

Today our planet stands on the brink of environmental collapse, what I call an eco-tastrophe. Our oceans and fisheries are in serious jeopardy. Global warming has reached alarming levels. Invasive species put native species at risk. There is a laundry list of issues to be concerned about. But what most of us do not realize is that, more importantly, so far nothing has happened that cannot be reversed, but only if we act quickly and wisely. **What ultimately happens is still up to us.....**

John F. Kennedy once said, "There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction." Well, comfortable inaction is no longer an option. Our community, our mountains, our planet deserve our commitment to take responsibility for the messes we have made and to do what we each can to fix them.

This is an exciting time to be alive, with many opportunities for creative thinking to deal with these challenges. We are entering a new age with a new paradigm to guide us: cooperation instead of competition; shared power instead of power over others; respect for our natural resources instead of exploitation of them. This is certainly not a time for comfortable inaction.

I hope that you will take this opportunity to commit—or recommit—yourself to working on behalf of this planet, which needs you so badly, through this wonderful organization. J-MCA is perfectly situated to make a difference here in Highlands and Cashiers, and the environmentally connected surrounding areas, where the effects of water and air pollution, poor development, invasive species, and many other issues affect us on a local level.

J-MCA could accomplish so much more if we had more people on board to help. That is where all of you come in. Please step up to the plate and help in any way you can, large or small.

I'll always stay involved in J-MCA, but I am happy to pass the baton to Robert E. Smith and Mary Skubna-Abranyi, two smart and dedicated people who, along with the rest of our board of directors, bring fresh vision and energy to the work of J-MCA.

## Here's Your Opportunity!

### Volunteers Needed



Robert E. Smith, Chair seeks your help in working at several events this year: The Green Living Fair, June 25-26, the Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, July 30 and the return of Lee Stetson on Oct. 9.

"We haven't done a good job of getting our supporters to be involved in volunteering at our events. As we all know, many hands makes for light work, so we hope you'll take a turn at a volunteer slot as well as attend these events. Please call the office as soon as you read this to find out more about what we need help with and how you can put your time to good use in making these events successful. Your participation will be great for you and the organization. We have started very well in initiating these new events, and reaching the potential they have for influencing the community, and raising the funds we need to do our important work will provide J-MCA with a bright future."

# New changes on the horizon for J-MCA

David M. Bates left J-MCA on March 31<sup>st</sup> after 51/2 years as Executive Director. He was instrumental in several initiatives including our work with others in addressing the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestation, the Green Living Fair, and the Panthertown Project. He leaves us with a lot to build on and we wish him well. Applicants are currently being considered for the position with plans to have a new director in place in May. We are lucky to have 7-year J-MCA veteran Debbie Lassiter as our Administrative Director to work closely with the Board as this transition takes place.



*Left- David accepts a birdhouse from Cynthia Strain made from recycled materials.*

*Middle- David enjoys lunch in the sun with Chair Robert E. Smith, J-MCA Board member Sherman Runions & wife Mary Jo and Peggy Crosby Center folks.*

*Right- The tenants at the Peggy Crosby Center pitch in with J-MCA to give David a farewell luncheon.*

J-MCA extends a heartfelt thank you to the Peggy Crosby Center friends.



## News from the Friends of Panthertown

### Accomplishments:

In the last year, the Friends of Panthertown installed carsonite signs at all trail intersections, purchased tools and safety equipment, collaborated with the USFS to create a trail map, and recorded over 1,000 volunteer hours maintaining trails.

### Future Projects:

There's still much work to be done. In 2010 our most pressing need is to raise funds to:

- Construct the Blackrock Spur Trail
- Improve gravel road leading to Salt Rock trailhead
- Build parking lots at Salt Rock, Cold Mountain, and Turkey Knob
- Repair the bridge over Panthertown Creek on the Mac's Gap Trail

### Volunteering:

Volunteers are needed to help maintain trails in Panthertown. So grab your work gloves, lace up your hiking boots and join us at a **Friends of Panthertown Work Day**. Anyone interested in volunteering is welcome to attend - no previous experience is necessary. Tools will be provided. Volunteers should bring a day pack with lunch, water, and rain gear. Check the calendar of events at [www.j-mca.org](http://www.j-mca.org) Friend of Panthertown page for details about upcoming work days which are held on the last Saturday of each month.

### Farewell:

After almost three years as the Friends of Panthertown Coordinator, Nina Elliott will be leaving the organization to pursue a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Clemson University. Since being hired in 2007 by the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, she has made significant contributions to the Friends group and conservation efforts in Panthertown Valley. We welcome Jason Kimenker on board as the new coordinator on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Jason comes to the organization with a tremendous history of volunteerism in Western North Carolina as well as strong managerial and administrative experience. We expect Jason to make great strides in the continued growth of the Friends of Panthertown group.



This is the third year that the **Green Living Fair** has served as an attraction for both the environmentally conscious and those looking for a great way to spend the day. 2010 promises to be fantastic; with entertainment, green home & garden tours, demonstrations, hikes, kids' projects, and a host of other options for the whole family! We are excited to be bringing some of the GLF event to Cashiers this year with the partnership of the Cashiers Village Council.

**Friday June 25th - Opening Event** will begin at 1 pm with "green" homes & garden tours and pathways hikes originating from the Cashiers Village Green's new Commons area. At 5 pm enjoy a "Meet & Greet" social time including music followed by a presentation from The Cashiers Village Council. The day will conclude with a fun eco-fashion show.

The **Main Event, Saturday June 26<sup>th</sup>** 10 am – 4 pm, will fill the Highlands Civic Center with a great lineup of vendors showcasing their environmental wares and services, artisans with earth-friendly hand-made crafts and jewelry and guest chefs (including Nick Figel, Mtn. Cook-off winner) showing off their healthy cooking skills. Tours of "green" homes and gardens will leave during the day, a Bascom-led hike through a portion of the town's greenway, and art projects for kids will make for a full day for anyone. Don't miss the educational presentations and short demonstrations going on throughout the event too; enlightening you on everything from cutting edge technology to gardening with native plants. The full schedule of presentations is being finalized and will be available soon.

Your attendance helps put our communities on the map as a leader of the "Green Living" movement in N.C. Mark your calendar today! An adult ticket is only \$5 (16 and under free), which covers admission for BOTH days and includes a home and/or garden tour. Purchase tickets at the events.

**The Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance  
and  
Highlands-Cashiers Players  
present**

**Destination Cashiers**

Directed by  
Donna Cochran

**Murder  
Murder Mystery Dinner Theater**

**Wine, Dine & Solve the Crime!**

**Friday, July 30**

Fun starts at 6:30 pm - Sapphire Resort Community

**New Fundraising Endeavour!**

Join us for a fun special evening with fantastic food served in interlaced courses during an intriguing live performance of mystery. Whether you are Sherlock Holmes or Angela Lansbury, this production will have you puzzling with others to find the culprit. Seating is configured in tables of eight to allow all of your friends to wine, dine, and solve the crime! This mystery madness benefits your locally active Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance. The play is performed by the Highlands-Cashiers Players with a wonderful cast of characters from our community. Put on your evening casual wear (no jeans) and enjoy a three course meal at the Sapphire Valley Resort Community Bldg. 6:30 pm Friday July 30<sup>th</sup>.

Tickets: \$75 before Mon. July 26<sup>th</sup>, \$80 after.  
An enjoyable way to support your non-profit!  
Contact J-MCA for more details and tickets.  
526-9938 ext.320, [jmca@dnet.net](mailto:jmca@dnet.net)  
[www.i-mca.org](http://www.i-mca.org) to buy online.

**Back By Popular Demand!**

**Stetson Returns as John Muir~ Oct. 8th**

Arrangements are in the final stages to bring John Muir back to life in another Lee Stetson stirring portrayal! Don't miss this special opportunity to hear John Muir's thrilling adventures, humorous tales and passion for America's wilderness.

Film-maker Ken Burns poses with Lee Stetson (as John Muir) in Yosemite. Stetson portrays wilderness explorer and conservationist John Muir in Burns' PBS documentary *Our National Parks: America's Best Idea*.



**New Show this year!**



Lee Stetson's performing *Conversations with a Tramp* before a sold out crowd of over 200 at the Highlands Playhouse Oct. 2009.

## Hemlock Woolly Adelgid- the Adopt-A-Tree Program continues...

J-MCA helped fund the treatment of the majestic hemlock trees on the property housing the Highlands Chamber of Commerce. This was a collaborative effort by J-MCA, Jimmy Tate (property owner), the Town of Highlands (building leasee), and the Chamber. J-MCA had suggested the trees be treated for some time, so it will now be a wait and see year as to whether the treatment is too late or not. At least they now have a fighting chance for survival.



### Partners in Protecting the incredible Cheoah Hemlock

J-MCA partnered again with the H-C Land Trust to protect the big hemlocks at the Henry Wright Tract from the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. J-MCA donated the necessary Imidacloprid chemical to treat 14 of the largest trees at this 22 acre site. One of those trees to be treated is the **world's largest and tallest living hemlock, the Cheoah**. This wonderfully healthy tree stands at just over 160 feet tall and remains healthy due to treatments started around four years ago.

The purchase of the chemicals was made possible by donations to JMCA's Preserve the Hemlocks Fund and the necessary soil injector was paid for through a grant from the Cullasaja Women's Organization to the Land Trust. Great things can be achieved through partnerships.



Left- looking skyward through the Chamber trees. Right- the incredible Cheoah reaches it's lofty height above the surrounding forest.

## River Issue

**The US Forest Service has withdrawn its preliminary decision** to allow limited boating on the upper Wild & Scenic portion of the river pending further evaluations. A decision is expected this Fall to decide whether to maintain or change the current Forest Plan management direction for the 3 National Forests involved in NC, GA, and SC relative to existing recreational uses including boating on the upper Chattooga River.

## Partners for the Little Tennessee

J-MCA continues to be part of the core group in this large collaborative effort across 7 western North Carolina counties. On March 25<sup>th</sup> a Regional Collaborators Meeting was held in Sylva to present the Regional Erosion and Sediment Control Initiative. Prior to the meeting, a survey had been circulated asking if there was a need to standardize and organize erosion and sediment control (E&SC) training in the region. The survey results showed a resounding 97% responding yes with an larger audience than expected turning out for the Collaborators Meeting. The group now moves forward with the logistics and funding for a training/class program. It is very encouraging to see the opportunity opening to coordinate requirements and training on a regional scale.

Membership renewal notices will go out in early June, however, renewing your membership now would be great! We need your support to keep up with the work! Thank you.

## HELP THE PLANET AND SAVE MONEY!



The energy star rebate program in NC started in April on Earth day weekend from April 22 –25. It offered 15% rebates on energy star household appliances that include dishwashers, refrigerators, clothes washers, and freezers. It was offered along with any other store discounts. There will be a second phase of rebates offered in June that covers air conditioners, heat pumps and furnaces, and water heaters.

For more information go to [www.ncrecovery.gov](http://www.ncrecovery.gov).

Make sure when you purchase new, that you recycle your old. Most appliance companies offer this service.

Also remember there is still the federal tax credit program going on for up to \$1500 for builders and homeowners retrofitting with windows, insulation, small wind energy and solar systems. Check this out at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov). Save the planet and the money.

**Come to our Green Living Fair on June 26<sup>th</sup> to learn more!** Reid Conway of the NC State Energy Office will speak on the State Energy Programs.

## Local School Outreach Updates

**Highlands School Recycling Program-** the Beta Club and J-MCA finish up the 3<sup>rd</sup> school year of this successful project.

**Blue Ridge School-** J-MCA completed the map designating the proposed ¾ mile nature trail. Next step is to have the field survey work done.

**Summit Charter School-** J-MCA arranged for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class to visit Gorges State Park on April 28<sup>th</sup> to learn about the HWA program in the park as well as the role hemlocks play in the ecosystem.