watauga arts council

ART in the OUTDOORS

PUBLIC ART PROPOSAL

TAKING FLIGHT

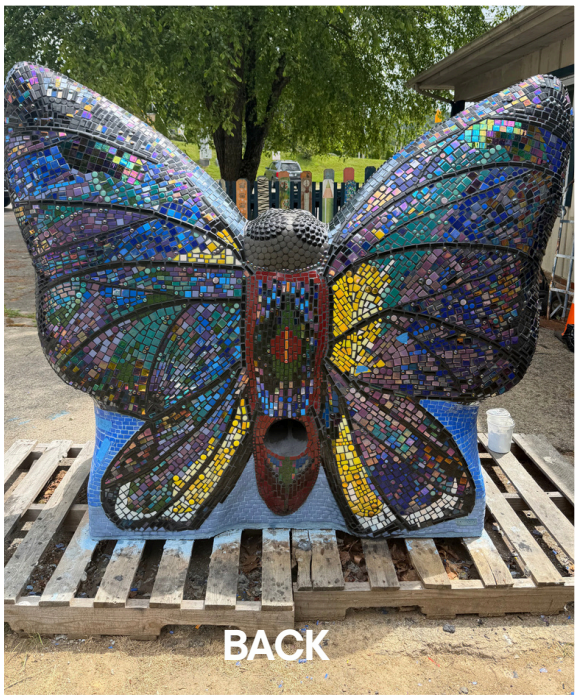
COMMUNITY MOSAIC BUTTERFLY BENCH

PRESENTED TO
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL

PROPOSED BY
AMBER BATEMAN

LEAD ARTIST
CINDY MICHAUD





OCTOBER 14, 2026

Requested Council Action

Watauga Arts Council (WAC) requests approval to place “Taking Flight”, a community-created butterfly mosaic bench, in the Greenway park loop off Deerfield Road behind the Levine Center. The installation provides a public art experience for the greater Boone area, outside the MSD, to align with the

The mosaic sculpture bench is offered as a community donation. Grant support, donated materials, and artist and volunteer contributions fully fund the artwork's creation; grant funds also support delivery of the bench. The requested Town contribution is coordination and assistance with site preparation and installation, in coordination with the Public Works Department.

Project Orgin

TAKING FLIGHT: PURPOSE AND IMPACT







Project Narrative and Purpose

Taking Flight transforms a practical park amenity into a welcoming work of public art. Fashioned around two butterfly forms, the mosaic bench will provide a place to pause, rest, and enjoy a quiet, shady setting along the Greenway. Its colorful design will create a distinctive focal point and invite residents and visitors to engage with art during everyday recreation, for free.

The project grew from mosaic classes offered at Watauga Arts Council. A group of senior women became excited about leaving an artistic legacy in the community they love and volunteered their labor to help complete the bench. Most are longtime Watauga County residents; one lives in Avery County and regularly visits Boone. Their shared work has strengthened friendships, developed artistic skills, and created a lasting expression of community pride.

A companion work, Fluttering By, is being fabricated through a project called Pieced Poles of the Blue Ridge, led by Cindy Michaud. Together, the bench and post will give the loop a recognizable artistic identity that the group of artists lovingly call the “Butterfly Park.”

Community Impact

The project will add useful seating and a colorful landmark to a park enjoyed by walkers and people seeking a quiet place to rest. It will recognize the contributions of local artists and older residents, demonstrate the value of community arts education, and create a visible legacy of shared effort.

The butterfly imagery also offers opportunities for future interpretation about nature and the environment. The bench and post will provide inviting photo settings for residents and visitors, supporting Town and WAC communications with playful invitations such as “Taking Flight in Boone” or “Fluttering By Boone.” Educational content or promotional activities can be developed in coordination with the Town.







Project Details

TAKING FLIGHT: MATERIALS AND INSTALLATION

Materials and Dimensions

The bench is sculpted from industrial-grade polystyrene covered with multiple layers of cement, mesh, and fiberglass. Glass mosaic tiles are adhered with mortar/thinset and finished with grout. The materials were selected for outdoor use and freeze/thaw conditions. A built-in drainage hole helps prevent standing water on the seat.

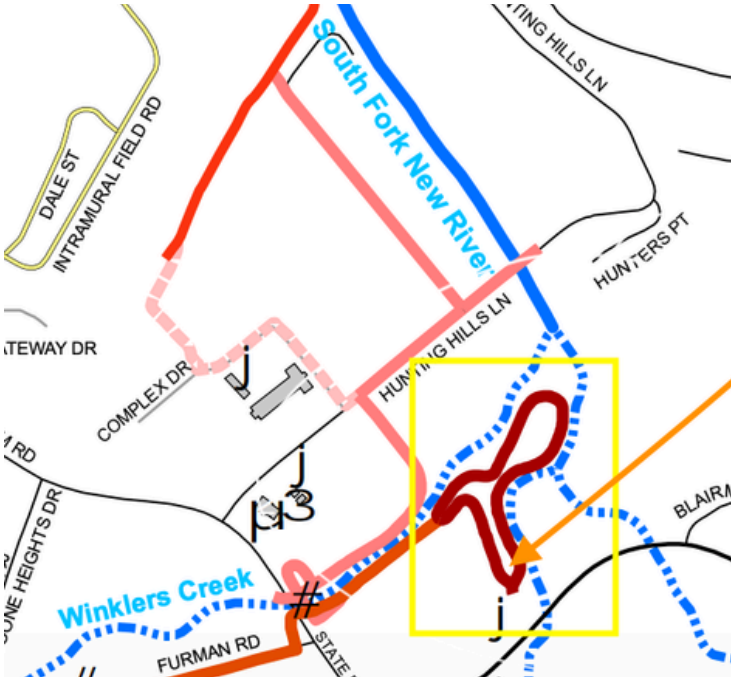
Bench base footprint	**53 inches wide × 28 inches deep**
Maximum wing width	Approximately 72 inches
Maximum overall height	Approximately 64 inches
Seat height	Approximately 19 inches
Companion post	Approximately 4 inches in diameter × 5 feet tall

Proposed Location and Installation

The proposed site is the Greenway loop behind the Levine Center, off Deerfield Road. WAC has conducted a site visit with Public Works to select the bench location, considering shade, visibility, delivery access, tree roots, drainage, and clear passage along the trail. Placement will preserve an accessible route and provide enough space to approach and use the bench. If unforeseen site conditions or installation complications make the proposed location impractical, WAC will defer to the Public Works Department's guidance and work with Town staff to select a suitable alternative location.

Site Preparation: Installation requires a prepared concrete pad, sufficient curing time, and secure anchoring with concrete screws. Public Works will review the concrete pad and anchoring requirements and determine an appropriate installation method. Final pad dimensions, foundation details, and anchors will follow Public Works preferred specifications.

Bench Delivery: Delivery will be scheduled after approval and site preparation, in coordination with Public Works. An equipment provider has committed to transporting the bench for a nominal fee.







Project Details

TAKING FLIGHT: FUNDING AND MAINTENANCE

Funding

- No Town funding is requested for artwork creation or purchase.
- The bench is a community donation supported by grants, donated materials, and contributed labor.
- WAC will use funds from the Town's contribution to the organization as part of its outside agency annual support for any additional or unforeseen expenses and long-term material maintenance.

Maintenance and Stewardship

- The artist anticipates limited routine maintenance, primarily occasional sweeping or cleaning of debris from the seat and keeping the drainage opening clear.
- Cindy Michaud has committed to checking the bench during its first year after installation and replacing any tiles that detach. WAC proposes incorporating routine care thereafter into park maintenance, with future repairs coordinated as needed.
- WAC will document and maintain records of materials, location, artist information, care instructions, and responsibilities for repairs as part of its larger Art in the Outdoor Initiative.

