# Passive Recreation Lands Funding Recommendations

*Presented by*

**Kevin Conrecode, Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee Chair**

**November 18, 2025**

# Open Space Bond



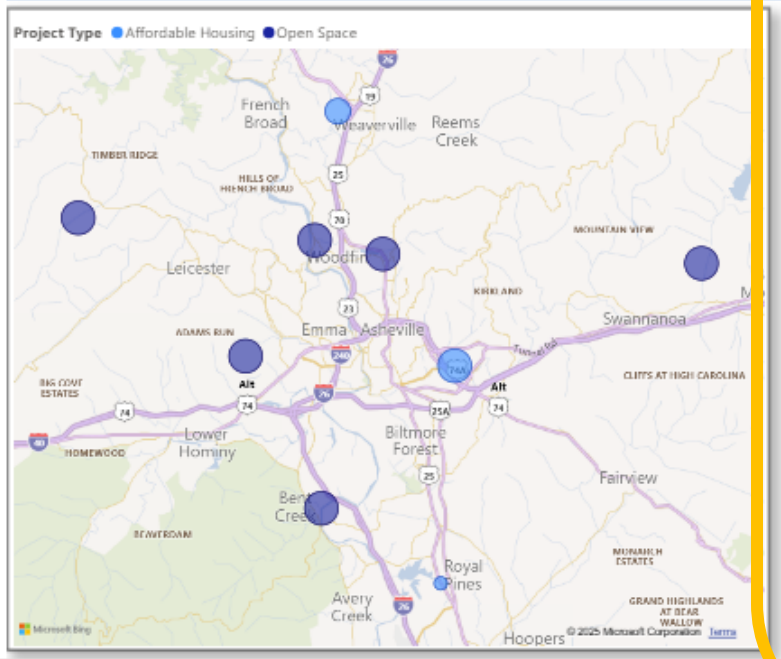
# Investments to Date

## Affordable Housing & Open Space Bond Tracking

Last Updated 10/17/25

### Affordable Housing Bonds

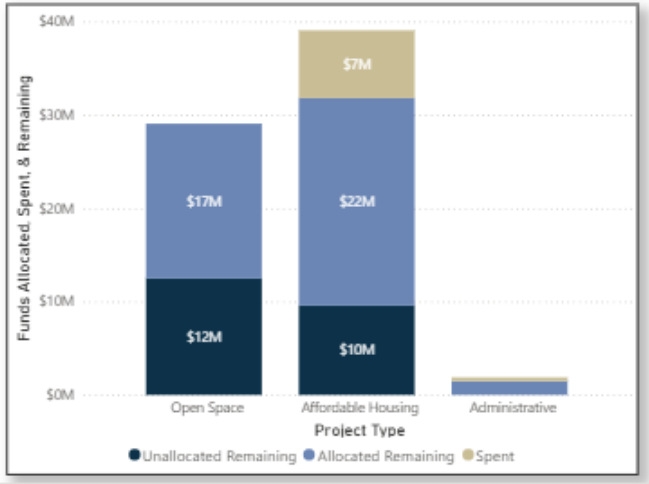
$30.4M Amount Allocated OF $40M Affordable Housing Total Bond




### Open Space Bonds

$17.5M Amount Allocated OF $30M Open Space Total Bond

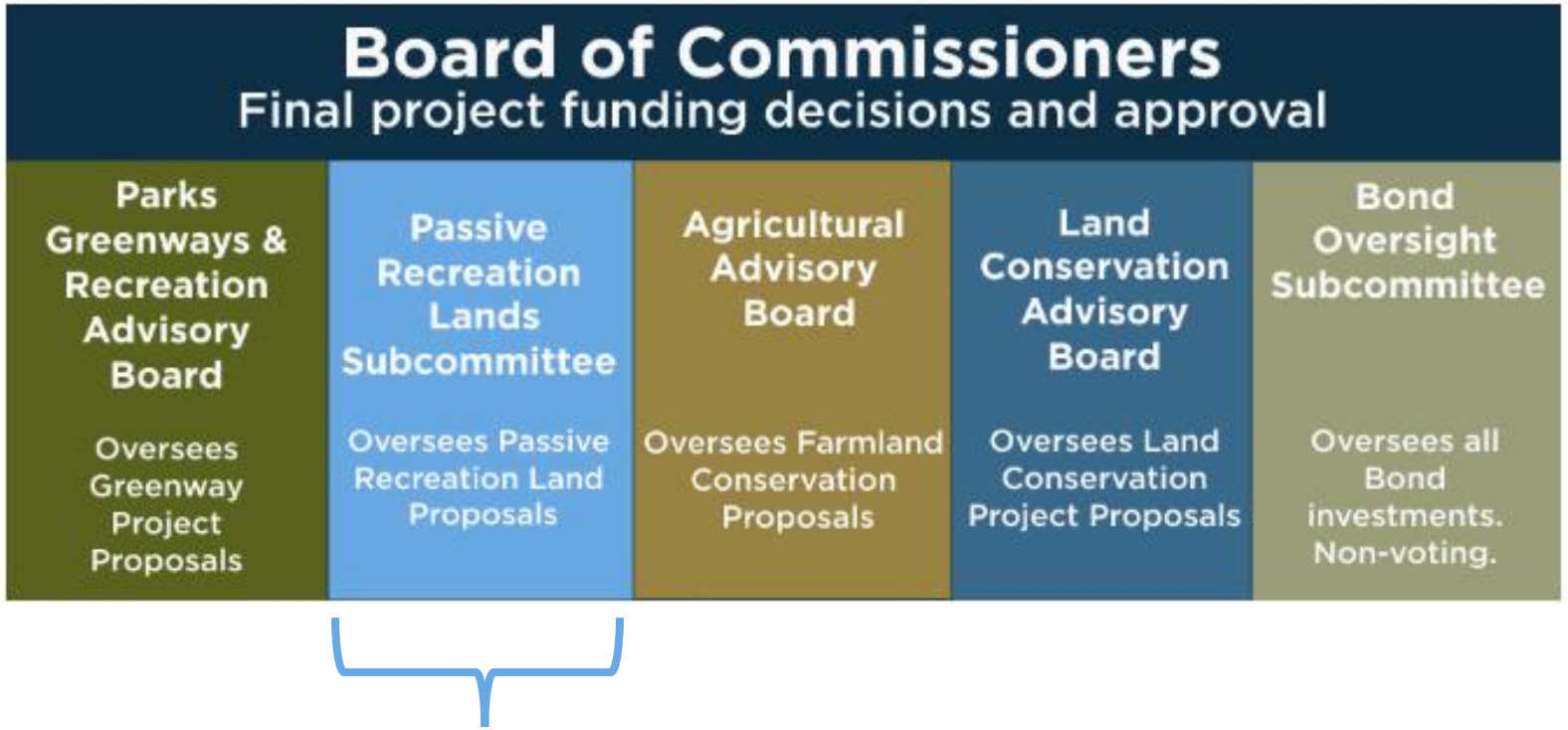
Currently **18** projects have been approved to move forward across both the Affordable Housing and Open Space Bond portfolios.



# Open Space Bond Funds

| | |
|---|---|
| Open Space Bond Total | $30,000,000 |
| - Total Committed | $17,533,670 |
| - Anticipated Conservation Easements | $2,531,900 |
| - Recommended Passive Recreation Lands Awards | $4,376,262 |
| Remainder | $5,558,168 |

# 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

# 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

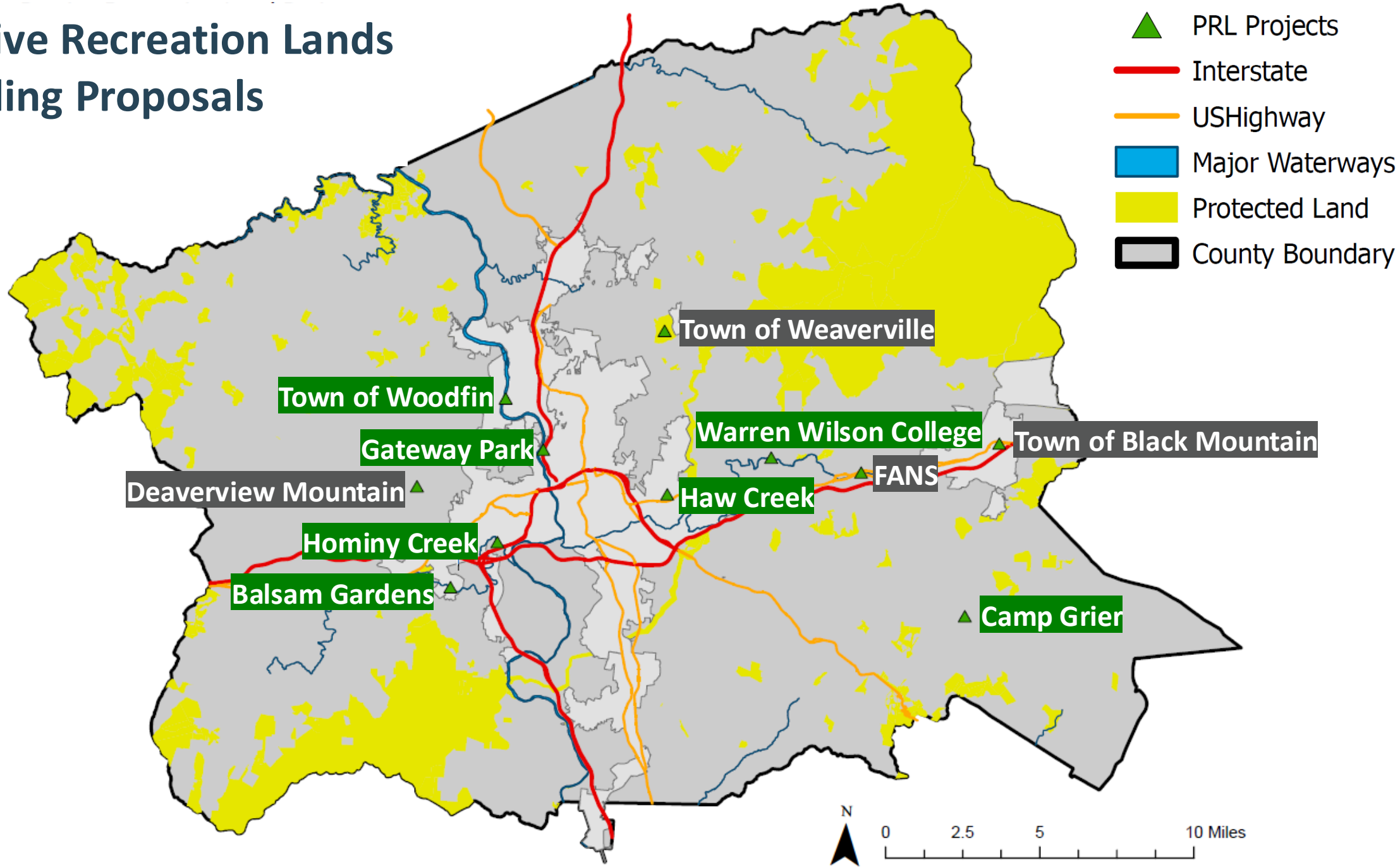
Makes final decision regarding project funding

# 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**

| Applicant | Project | Initial Funding Request | 2024 Recommended Funding | Updated 2025 Funding Request | 2025 Recommended Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Balsam Gardens | 33+/- Acres on Sandhill Road | $1,633,400 | $1,090,000 | $1,633,400 | $750,000 |
| Riverlink | Gateway Park | $200,000 | $200,000 | $200,000 | $200,000 |
| Haw Creek Community Association | Haw Creek Park Greenway | $102,182 | $102,182 | $127,784 | $127,784 |
| Asheville Greenworks | Hominy Creek Greenway Trail Improvements | $312,834 | $312,834 | $326,174 | $326,174 |
| Warren Wilson College | Improving Public Access & Use of Lands | $141,580 | $141,580 | $150,000 | $150,000 |
| Town of Woodfin | Riverside Park | $3,368,660 | $2,195,231 | $2,134,804 | $2,134,804 |
| Camp Grier | Worx Community Forest Trail Development | $756,800 | $675,000 | $687,500 | $687,500 |
| Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy | Deaverview Mountain | $1,000,000 | $1,000,000 | $0 | $0 |
| Town of Black Mountain | Ridgecrest Connector | $705,000 | $575,000 | $1,180,938 | $0 |
| Town of Weaverville | Weaverville Watershed Trails and Wildlife Preserve | $1,072,030 | $0 | N/A | $0 |
| Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa (FANS) | Woodmen Trailhead and Educational Park | $1,638,950 | $0 | N/A | $0 |
| | | **$10,931,436** | **$6,291,827** | **$6,440,660** | **$4,376,262** |

# Passive Recreation Lands Funding Proposals



Not Recommended

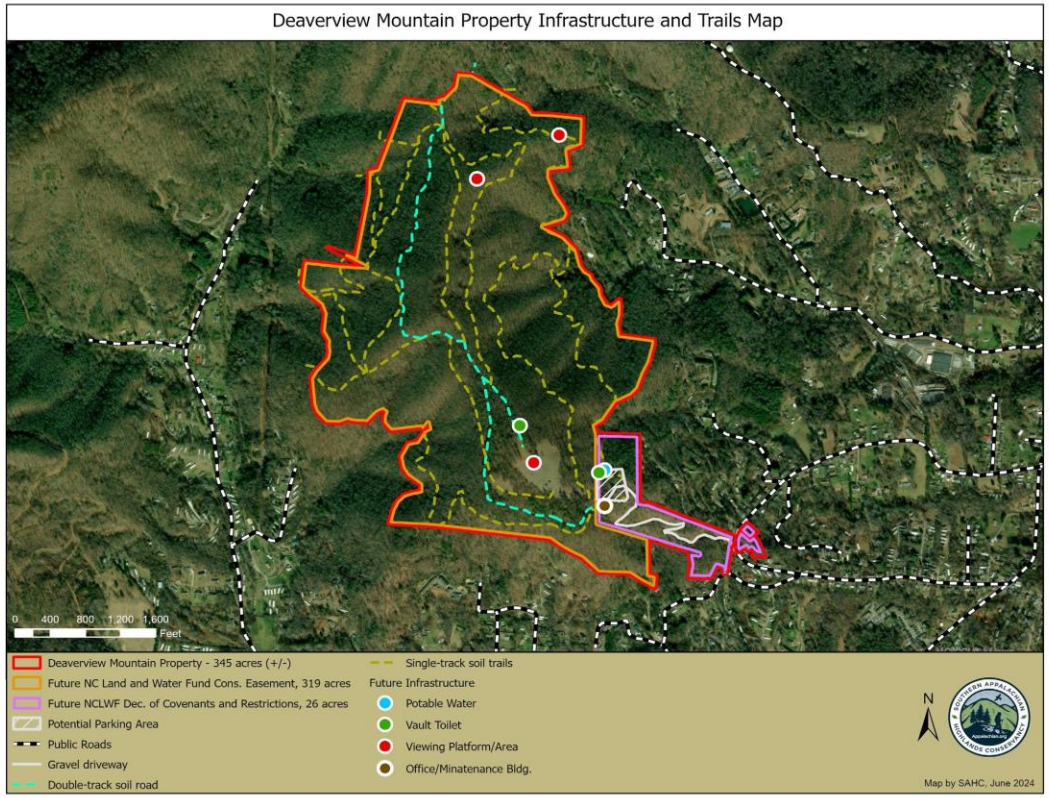
# Deaverview Mountain

## Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

**Recommended Funding: $0**

The original request was for $1,000,000 SAHC to put toward the purchase of the 345 acre Deaverview Mountain property.

The project was awarded Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program grant to support purchase costs, so **this request has been withdrawn.**



Not Recommended

# Ridgecrest Connector
## Town of Black Mountain

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

The Ridgecrest Connector is a multi-use path that will serve as a critical connection for the Fonta Flora State Trail (FSST). The requested bond funding would pay for ¾ mile of path construction. **This project is not ready to proceed.** The current focus is securing funding for design & engineering.



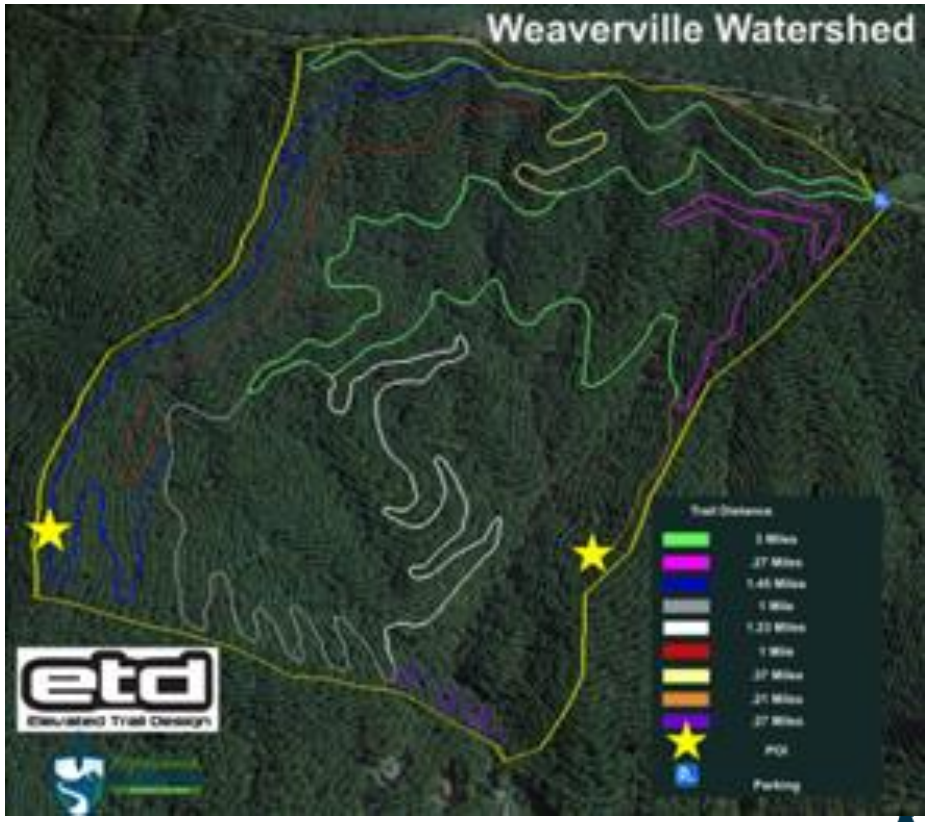
Not Recommended

# 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. The requested funding would pay for the construction of over 9 miles of trails. Design is not yet complete. **This project is not ready to proceed.** The current focus is post-Helene wildfire fuel load management for this site.



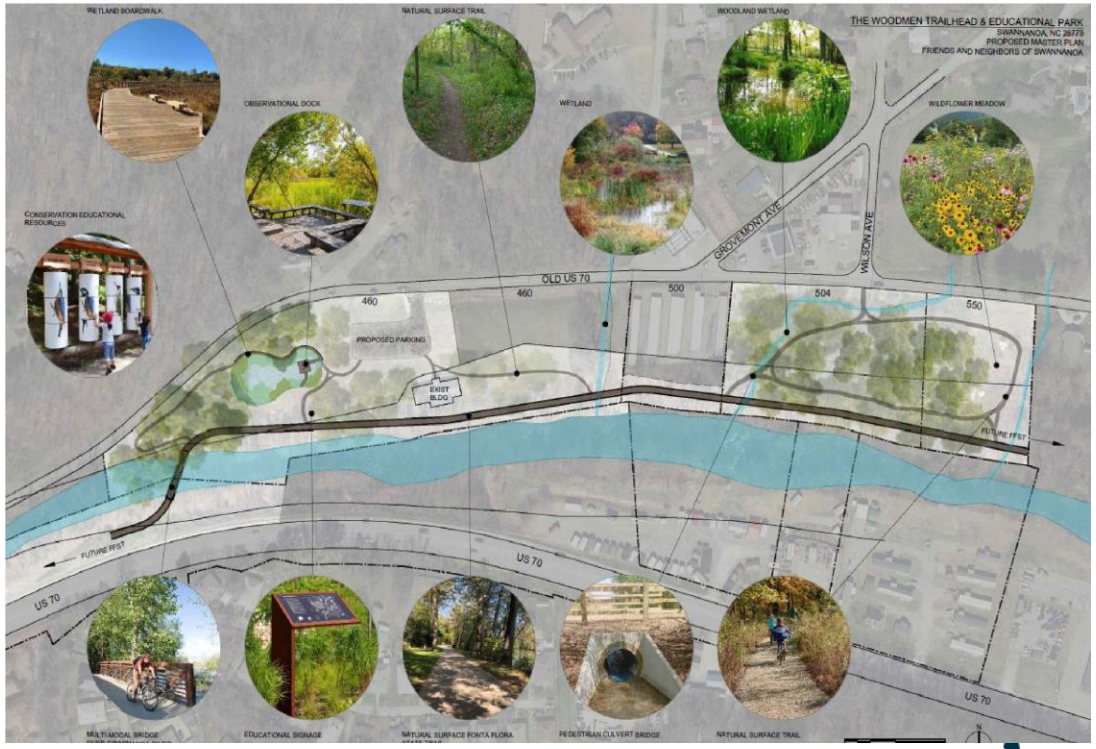
Not Recommended

# 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) in close proximity to Grovemont Park and the newly announced Beacon Village project. **This project is not yet ready to proceed.** The current focus is on feasibility study to inform potential future conservation easement requests.



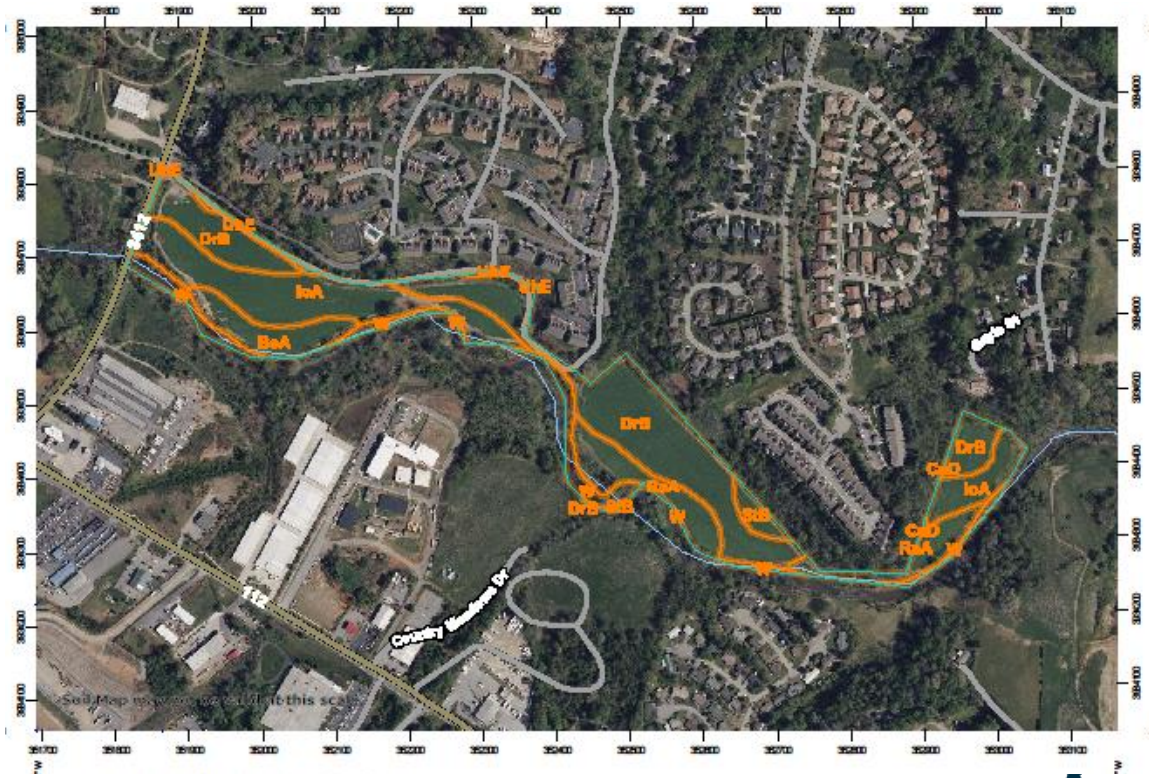
Recommended

# 33 +/- acres on Sandhill Road

## Balsam Gardens, LLC

**Recommended Funding: Up to $750,000**

This project proposes the County acquire 33 acres of riparian land consisting of approx. a mile of creek frontage along Hominy Creek. The acquisition of the property or an easement 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.



Recommended

# Haw Creek Park Greenway
## Haw Creek Community Association

**Recommended Funding: $127,784**

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.

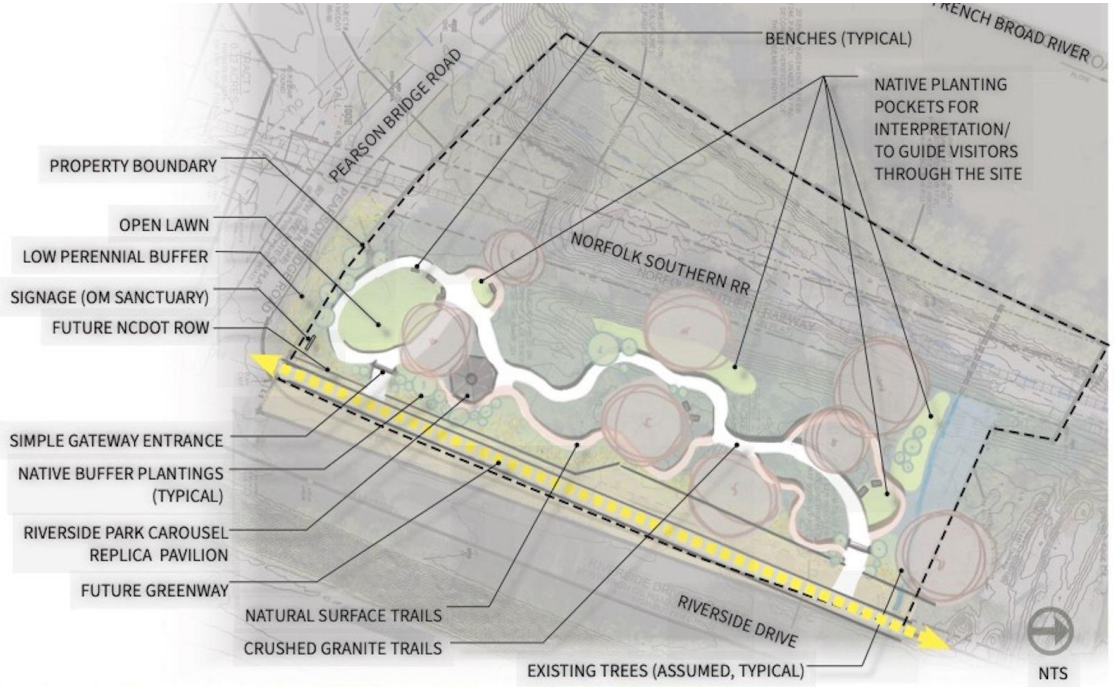


Recommended

# 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.



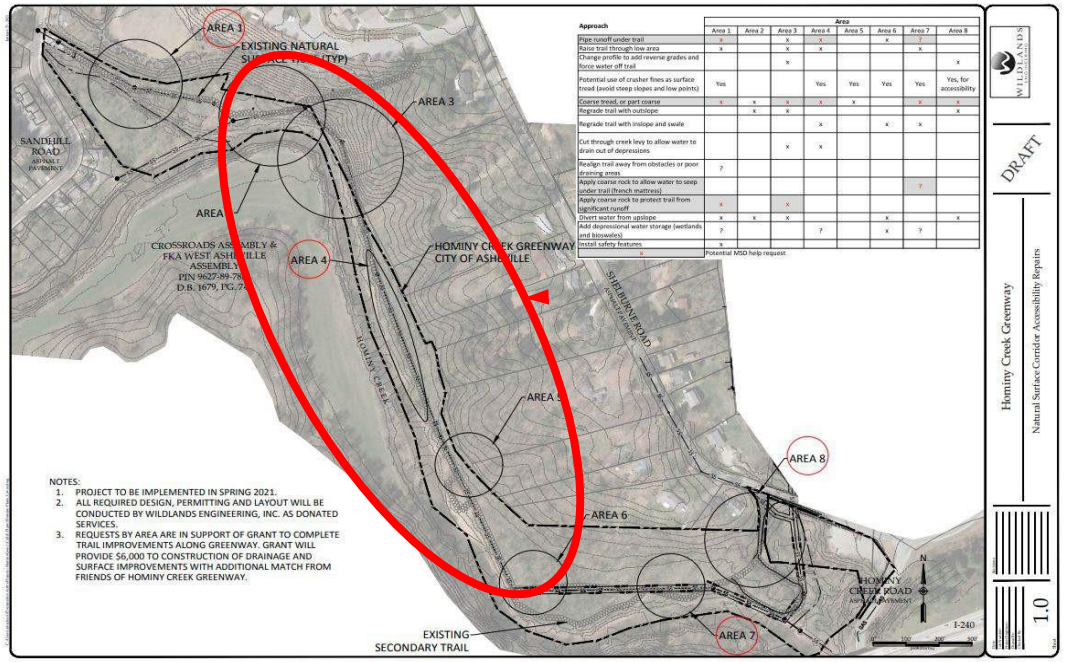
Recommended

# Hominy Creek Greenway

## Asheville Greenworks/Friends of Hominy Creek

**Recommended Funding: $326,174**

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.



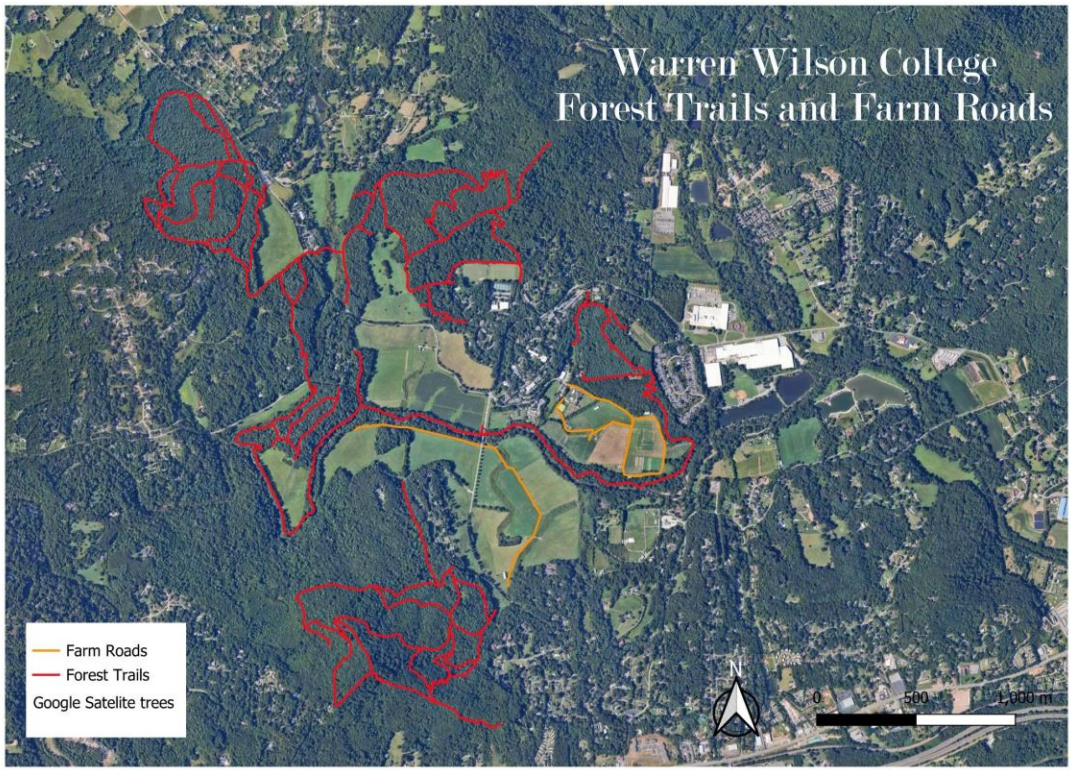
Recommended

# Improving Public Access & Use of Lands

## Warren Wilson College

**Recommended Funding: $150,000**

This funding will be used to upgrade and improve the river trail infrastructure extensively by the public for passive recreation. This work will address storm damage and improve user safety, access and quality of experience for County residents using College lands for passive recreation activities.

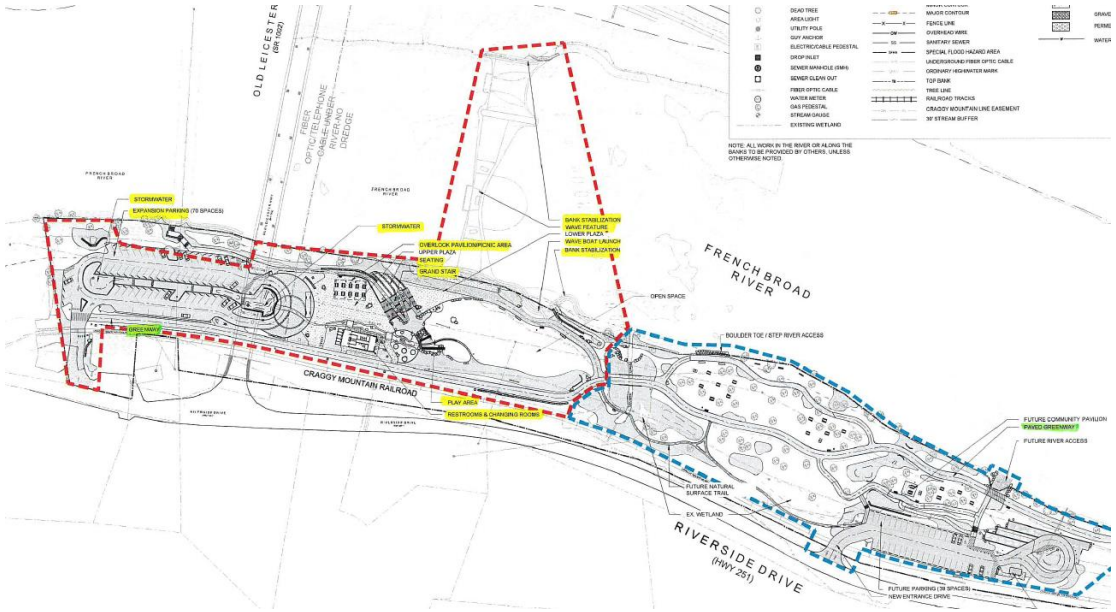


Recommended

# Riverside Park
## Town of Woodfin

**Recommended Funding: $2,134,804**

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.



Recommended

# Worx Community Forest Trail Development

## Camp Grier

**Recommended Funding: $687,500**

The Worx Community Forest is a 225-acre conservation project surrounding a 35-acre learning campus. This funding would be used to develop 8 miles of multi-use natural surface trails designed for a beginner and intermediate hiking and mountain biking user experience.



# Funding Recommendations

These **7** projects are recommended for a total of **$4,376,262** which would leverage the following impacts:

**254** Acres newly open to the public

**33** Acres newly conserved

**14** Miles of trails/multi-use path supported

# Open Space Bond Funds

| | |
|---|---|
| Open Space Bond Total | $30,000,000 |
| - Total Committed | $17,533,670 |
| - Anticipated Conservation Easements | $2,531,900 |
| - Recommended Passive Recreation Lands Awards | $4,376,262 |
| Remainder | $5,558,168 |

# Request for Board Action

- Budget amendment to adopt the funding recommendations as proposed

# Additional Subcommittee Recommendation

The Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee voted to recommend that Commissioners hold the remainder of funds for future committee/subcommittee funding cycle(s).

Potential future investments include:

- Funding for the projects that need additional planning/design before they are ready for an award
- Funding for other community-led projects
- Funding for county-led projects, such as those coming out of the Parks & Recreation master plan or Hazard Mitigation acquisitions

# Appendix: Bond Fund Commitments as of October 2025

| Item | Amount | Status | Primary Type |
|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative Fees | $ 937,213 | Committed | Administration |
| Agricultural Growth Zone Match | $ 2,345,443 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Battle Forest | $ 375,500 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Deaverview Mountain | $ 7,671,764 | Committed | Open Space |
| Ferry Road Open Space | $ 3,000,000 | Committed | Open Space |
| Kestrel Herb Farm | $ 259,000 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Lake Eden Preserve | $ 250,000 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Okoboji Farm | $ 511,500 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Parham-Fortner Farm | $ 150,000 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Sandy Hollar Farm | $ 760,000 | Committed | Conservation Easements |
| Woodfin Greenway: Beaverdam Creek | $ 997,355 | Committed | Greenways |
| Woodfin Greenway: Hwy 251 | $ 275,895 | Committed | Greenways |
| Pending Conservation Easements | $ 2,531,900 | Anticipated | Conservation Easements |
| Pending Open Space | $ 4,376,262 | Anticipated | Open Space |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Total Open Space Bond** | **$30,000,000** |
| Total Committed | $17,533,670 |
| Total Anticipated | $6,908,162 |
| **Remainder** | **$5,558,168** |