

Hemlock Preservation Project

*FY 2017 Buncombe County Community
Funding*

WNC Communities

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Application Form

Project Name*

Name of Project

Hemlock Preservation Project

Amount Requested*

Amount Requested

\$25,000.00

Service Area*

Which Commissioner Districts are served by this program?

Access a map of Buncombe County Commissioner districts [here](#).

District 1

District 2

District 3

Which county sustainability goal aligns best with the goals of this project?*

Based on the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan, select a Category, Goal & Objective that align with the focus of the project and the specific results that will be achieved.

Access the Buncombe County Sustainability Plan [here](#).

Environment > Partnerships for Conservation/Preservation/Restoration of Natural Resources > Protect ecological systems/wildlife

If applicable, select a second sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

Result 2 is optional - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

Environment > Partnerships for Conservation/Preservation/Restoration of Natural Resources > Conserve and protect water resources

If applicable, select a third sustainability goal that aligns with project goals.

Result 3 is optional - Select if project aligns with more than one Sustainability Category, Goal & Objective.

Project Description

Project Description*

Description of Project

Hemlock trees throughout the county have been decimated by the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). The loss of hemlocks negatively impacts water quality, wildlife, plant nurseries, homeowners, and the tourism industry. Many of the remaining hemlock trees are only alive today because they have received chemical pesticide treatments that have acted as an immediate life-support system. Although chemical treatments provide essential short-term HWA-control, they require repeated applications and are impractical in many situations. A sustainable treatment alternative uses predatory beetles in an integrated biological control program. *Laricobius nigrinus*, a predator beetle native to the Pacific NW, has been released in NC since 2003. Relying on beetles collected from the NW is an expensive and resource-limited arrangement. If we can establish local "insectaries," we can accelerate the spread of the beetles in a more efficient and economic manner. The long-term goal is to reduce our dependence on chemicals and ensure the longevity of our hemlocks and associated ecosystems, providing not only environmental benefits, but social and economic benefits, as well. To achieve that outcome, we need to utilize all the intervention tools currently available in a logical and coordinated manner. During the first year of the Buncombe project, several sites with remaining intact hemlock stands, have been identified as high priority locations for beetle releases. 6 partners (~14 sites) are due to receive beetles this year; however many remain on a waiting list, should additional funding become available. The long-term success requires far more than acquiring & releasing beetles. Follow-up monitoring, long-term planning, integration with other treatment approaches, beetle augmentation, collection & redistribution, education & outreach are necessary elements that require support, time & financial assistance. Another year of funding will provide a stronger foundation to operate in the future.

How many people will this project serve?*

State the number of individuals or households in Buncombe County that will be served by this project. Also state the number of people that will experience the desired result. For example, if dropout prevention services are being delivered to 100 students, how many will successfully graduate from high school?

Approximately 250,000, this project will serve everyone in Buncombe County because we all benefit from a healthy environment with clean water, stable streams, intact ecological systems, the preservation of rare species and natural vegetation communities, and a reduction in dependence on chemicals.

Describe the people this project will serve.*

Characterize the demographics of the project's target population in terms such as age, gender, income, race, ethnicity, geographic area, etc. Include information about method of referral/recruitment of the target population.

The Hemlock Restoration Initiative serves the entire state of North Carolina, including Buncombe County. As mentioned above, all residents will benefit from the environmental and ecological outcomes of this program. However, specific populations will receive additional direct benefits. These include: commercial and recreational fishermen, other recreational users of streams and trails, farmers and other rural landowners with hemlock resources, plant nurseries, visitors and managers of state lands within the county, private homeowners, and future generations who may once again experience the sensation of walking through a mature, healthy hemlock forest.

What key steps will you take to achieve the results of this project?*

Describe the core elements of your implementation plan, including milestones that will take place within the funding timeframe.

MILESTONES & TIMELINE:

JANUARY-FEBRUARY: Create geodatabase and map for all prior releases in county and surrounding areas; develop MOU template; develop image library of ideal insectary site characteristics and different stages of HWA; identify additional potential sites and reach out to landowners to schedule site assessments; conduct remaining beetle releases as necessary

MARCH-JUNE: Monitor all prior release sites for beetle presence and predation, HWA-load, and new growth; train key partners in monitoring protocols; lead educational hikes/presentations to highlight the program; collect images to add to libraries

JULY-SEPTEMBER: Check with partners re: needs; conduct site assessments of new sites; prioritize & plan fall beetle releases (augmentative & initial releases); reporting

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER: Conduct last-minute visits; beetle releases; monitoring, data & beetle collection; outreach events

DECEMBER: Review program; modify as necessary; apply for additional funding

Describe the evidence of success that backs this project's approach.*

What evidence of success (i.e. evidence-based research, practice model, accreditation, industry standards, and/or other framework) are you using as a basis for your project design?

WNC Communities is a 66 year-old non-profit with a framework including stellar Board leadership & a willingness to work with numerous partners in State, County & Local Governments toward common goals.

The program in Buncombe was implemented in December 2015, so it is too early to measure successful establishment, however, initial engagement with county partners has been very optimistic. A similar program in the Banner Elk/Grandfather Mountain high country, which has received Ln beetles since 2003, shows substantial promise, in that beetles have been consistently recovered, widespread natural dispersion is occurring over successive generations, and trees that were formerly in decline are showing signs of new growth and recovery. Recovery of Ln beetles within Buncombe County, at both release sites and non-release sites, demonstrates the potential for Buncombe to mirror the success further north. US Forestry Service research and entomologists also support this program's approach.

Describe your data collection, tracking, and reporting procedures.*

Explain your methods for documenting project, service and client information. Include a description of any software or other tools utilized.

The HRI program has its own schedule and dedicated contract person assigned to manage grants, document & track progress toward implementation of the project. Biological and ecological data collection protocols and forms used by the USFS have been adapted to record initial release data and successive monitoring efforts. Geo-referenced data is collected and stored using GPS and GIS software and an online database. Other software used includes Quickbooks for Non-profits for financial reporting, MS Office with Excel and Word primarily used for tracking progress, reporting and data management.

Explain your technological resources and capacity.*

Explain your current technological strengths and barriers and how this impacts your ability to track data and report outcomes. Who is responsible for adaptation and use of technology within your organization?

The HRI Coordinator is proficient in GIS mapping and geodatabase management. Additional technological support is received from partners, including the US Forestry Service, NC Forestry Service, Blue Ridge RC&D, and NC State University. Additional key staff & volunteers have the ability to create reporting documents with the current software programs available to our office. A contracted accountant's background is in information technology and she provides invaluable computer/equipment services on an as needed basis.

Organizational Profile

How does the proposed project support your mission and strategic plan?*

State your mission and the date of your most recent strategic plan, and explain how the proposed project helps advance your organizational goals.

WNC Communities' mission is to support sustainable economic development opportunities that are unique to each community, while together developing strategies that improve community life. Our purpose is

to provide a unique forum for leaders in WNC to convene, collaborate and carry out innovative programs to

improve the quality of life for rural communities and to enhance the economy of the agriculture sector.

This

is accomplished through a program of work with a robust focus on community development & agriculture as well as addressing specific needs in forestry. Our plan is consistently reviewed by leadership with an approach of maintaining the flexibility needed to incorporate new programs as funding becomes available. TVA settlement funds were made available through the NCDA&CS along with a match from USFS to develop the HRI program for the State. Current FY funding from Buncombe provided the opportunity to begin a Ln beetle program for hemlock stands in the county.

What expertise/accomplishments do you have that are relevant to the proposed project?*

List your organization's strengths as well as accomplishments from the past 3 years that position the organization to be successful with the proposed project.

Historically, WNC Communities (WNC Development Association & WNC Associated Communities) along with State & County leadership created significant pieces of infrastructure for the region. The past 3 years, WNC Communities supports WNC RLC, completed the Aleen Steinberg Center at DuPont State Forest, created a WNC Brewer's Grain Alliance to connect farmers to a feed supply, became the administrator & facilitator for WNC AgOptions Program and created a competitive grant program. In the past year, WNC Communities managed the School Energy Efficiency program and developed the Hemlock Restoration Initiative. In the 1st 2 months of the Hemlock Preservation Buncombe County project, we released 1800 of 5000 Ln beetles at 7 sites, representing a diverse array of partners (state, municipal, non-profit land trust, and private university). We have identified an ideal county insectary site and have a waiting list of other interested partners, including the Biltmore Estate & Governor's Residence.

Describe partners that are critical to the success of your organization.*

List any external partners, intermediaries or advisors important to your success, and describe their role and evidence of their commitment. Describe successful collaborations with these people or groups.

- NCD&CS: Committed \$350k, facilitated use of State Veterans Cemetery as insectary site.
- USFS: Committed \$70k, provides technical advice, support & training.
- NCFS: Tech/scientific support, GIS software & partnership support for state lands.
- MountainTrue: Liaison; Public Lands Biologist advises; Forest Keepers Coordinator collaborates for releases & outreach events
- BRRC&D: Implementing program on regional level; collaboration on training, outreach, biocontrol meetings, materials, procedures, protocols, & data-sharing
- City of Asheville: Providing access & facilitating releases on Carolina hemlocks in Asheville Watershed
- Town of Montreat: Augmenting county beetle releases w/funds to implement IPM plan, to serve as a model
- Warren Wilson College: Engaging students in volunteering, monitoring & long-term research
- SAHC: Easements on two beetle release sites & conserved properties to possibly become release sites for 2nd year.
- Biltmore: Has Ln population; interested in working with County

Financial Information

Nonprofit financial assurance requirements:

Financial statements, prepared using a recognizable basis of accounting (i.e., modified accrual) and IRS Form 990s must be submitted to Buncombe County annually.

- Organizations with annual revenues of \$300,000 or greater must submit financial statements audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.
- Those with revenues between \$100,000 and \$300,000 must submit financial statements reviewed in accordance with SSARS 19.
- Those with revenues of less than \$100,000 must submit non-disclosure financial statements compiled in accordance with SSARS 19.

All financial statements must be reported on by a certified public accountant and include a full balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement.

These requirements are considered minimum requirements. Organizations may submit a higher level of assurance than is required.

IRS Form 990 - Upload Here

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the 990 form you most recently completed.

WNC Communities 990 FYE 6.30.2014.pdf

If your organization does not have a 990, briefly state the reason.

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

990 is attached.

Financial Statements - Upload here

Click Choose File to upload a copy of the most recently completed financial statements (audit, compilation or review).

WNC Communities Audit FY Ending 6.30.2014.pdf

If your organization does not have financial statements, briefly state the reason.

Include a statement of intent to comply with nonprofit financial assurance requirements as listed above.

Most current audit attached.

Complete Budget Worksheet - Upload Here*

Download the budget form [Here](#).

Complete the budget form for this project/program and the overall agency. Save it to your computer, then upload it by clicking Choose File.

HRI community-funding-budget-form.xlsx

Budget Narrative*

Describe all differences between current year and proposed year. List all pending funding sources with expected date of notification. Please detail any other information that may help clarify the budget.

In the current fiscal year, Buncombe County generously dedicated \$25,000 towards the procurement of 5,000 beetles at \$5.00 per beetle. The hours invested by the HRI Coordinator in site identification, assessment, evaluation, outreach to participating landowners/land managers and the general public, education, coordinating and implementing releases and follow-up monitoring, have all been underwritten by other grant funds at this time. The 2016-2017 proposal differs from the previous year in that we request \$17,500 be dedicated to the procurement of beetles or other intervention materials, while \$5,000 will be used to cover hours related to site assessments, releases and monitoring, and \$2,500 be dedicated to landowner outreach, education and training to landowners, partners and the general public.

What (if any) portion of requested funds will be used to support capital expenses?*

Capital projects are defined as those used to acquire or upgrade physical assets such as property, buildings, or equipment. Please detail.

No funds will be used to support capital expenses

Employee Wages

Please provide information about the wage breakdowns of your employees. Living wage for Buncombe County has been identified as \$11.00 per hour for employees with employer-provided health insurance and \$12.50 per hour for employees without.

Employees with employer-provided health insurance*

List the number of employees in your organization with employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$10.99 per hour

\$11.00 - \$14.99 per hour

\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour

\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour

\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour

\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour

\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour

\$40.00+ per hour

WNC Communities has 1 full-time and 3 part-time staff and none of the employees receive employer-provided health insurance. The HRI Coordinator is currently contracted to manage the work associated with the program.

Employees without employer-provided health insurance*

List the number of employees in your organization without employer-provided health insurance in each wage category. For salaried employees, use hourly wage equivalents.

\$7.25 - \$12.49 per hour

\$12.50 - \$14.99 per hour
\$15.00 - \$19.99 per hour
\$20.00 - \$24.99 per hour
\$25.00 - \$29.99 per hour
\$30.00 - \$34.99 per hour
\$35.00 - \$39.99 per hour
\$40.00+ per hour

WNC Communities has 1 full-time and 3 part-time staff and none of the employees receive employer-provided health insurance. The HRI Coordinator is currently contracted to manage the work associated with the program.