

Buncombe Environmental Leadership Award (BELA) Nomination
Award Category: Individual

Nominee: William (Bill) M. Eaker	Nominated by: Denise M. Braine
Position: Environmental Services Manager	Relationship: Colleague
Organization: Land-of-Sky Regional Council	Organization: Buncombe County Planning Dept.
Title: Environmental Services Manager	Title: Planner III
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Nominee Information:

It is an honor and privilege to nominate Bill Eaker as a candidate for a Buncombe Environmental Leadership Award in the “Individual” category. Several individuals and staff members from local organizations contributed information to include in this nomination. Everyone expressed their sincere support for this nomination and agreement that Bill Eaker is a community leader whose personal and professional life demonstrates his commitment to environmental awareness, protection, and advocacy.

Bill has over 30 years’ experience in environmental, land use and growth management planning at the local, regional and state levels. He has worked at Land-of-Sky Regional Council since 1981 and provides technical assistance to local governments on environmental issues in the areas of water resources management, air quality planning and clean vehicle technologies. He received a BA degree in Zoology in 1979 and a Master of Public Administration degree in Environmental and Growth Management in 1981 from Florida Atlantic University.

Notable Contributions:

Bill has been both a strong voice and a key behind-the-scenes strategist in carrying out a regional public education and outreach program on air quality issues and solutions including energy conservation and mobile source emission reduction measures. Bill currently serves as the Coordinator of both the Regional Clean Air Campaign (CAC), which he worked to establish in 1998, and the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition, which he established in April 2004. Through his leadership, the Coalition is seeking a U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities designation for a five-county area, including Buncombe County.

Under Bill’s leadership, the Coalition has assisted numerous public and private sector stakeholders in developing and securing grant funding for alternative fuel vehicle and infrastructure projects. These successful projects have resulted in the reduction of 319,737 gasoline gallon equivalents and 2,364 tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced annually. The Coalition’s stakeholder fleet includes 1,373 alternative fuel vehicles utilizing biodiesel, E85, CNG, LPG, electrics, and hybrid-electric vehicles.

One such project was a Clean Fuel Conversion Project undertaken by Buncombe County for its community transportation program, Mountain Mobility, whereby ten vehicles were converted to dual fuel systems allowing the use of liquid propane autogas an alternative to gasoline. Bill and his staff provided technical assistance to County staff in writing grant applications, consultation on contractual agreements for ARRA projects involving alternative fuels and vehicles, and oversight during the conversion process to ensure all ARRA and EPA guidelines were followed and met. Mountain Mobility

was the first community transportation system in North Carolina to convert public transportation vehicles to cleaner burning and domestically produced fuels, resulting in a substantial positive impact on Buncombe County's carbon footprint (reduction of 45.5 tons in greenhouse gas emissions annually). Seeing the success of Buncombe County's alternative fuel success story, five other transportation systems have initiated or completed similar clean fuel conversion projects. Bill also provided assistance to the County on the purchase of 12 shuttle-type, small transit buses with dual CNG/gasoline fuel systems, resulting in the reduction of greenhouse emissions by 12.3 tons.

Support of Environmental Plans or Initiatives:

Bill has extensive experience addressing water quality issues in the region like urban stormwater. He was hired by the Council in 1981 to implement various strategies in the Areawide 208 Water Quality Management Plan with an emphasis on addressing non-point sources of pollution. To list just a few of his dozens of projects, Bill managed the Asheville Stormwater Management Project in the mid 1980s that led to the establishment of a stormwater utility to fund an improved management program. He developed a Guide to Stormwater Management for Local Officials in 1994 and conducted workshops across the state. He organized the Ross Creek Urban Watershed Restoration Project in 2000 to restore a small, impaired urban stream within the City of Asheville. Bill worked to establish the Regional Stormwater Planning Committee to assist local officials in complying with the EPA and NC Phase II Stormwater Rules. This included forming the WNC Stormwater Partnership to design and implement a Regional Stormwater Education Program.

Partnering and Cooperative Conservation:

Bill has managed over fifty environmental improvement projects during his 30-year career with the Land of Sky Regional Council. He has extensive experience facilitating diverse stakeholder groups to address regional issues and working with the public and the media. Bill has worked with multiple partners to address a wide range of water resource issues within the French Broad River Basin including the establishment of several watershed improvement associations and programs (e.g., French Broad River Foundation, Mills River Partnership, Mud Creek Watershed Restoration Council, and Haywood Waterways Association). Bill's work through the Council can be credited in large part with the creation of RiverLink. Bill also co-staffed the Mountain Ridge and Steep Slope Protection Advisory Committee that developed a framework for sustainable mountain ridge development in Western North Carolina; and as a result of his work, the Council secured funding to study the issue and develop strategies to promote safer and more responsible development. Bill's expertise in assisting entities in application of grant funds totals \$9.8 million in awards since 2002. Through education campaigns of the Clean Vehicles Coalition, Bill and numerous volunteers that he enlisted have manned booths at Bele Chere to showcase low emission vehicles. Bill "walks the talk" in his personal life, having purchased two Toyota Prius Hybrids over the years. He also led the effort for the Land of Sky Regional Council's first fleet vehicle to be a hybrid.

Demonstrated Vision and Environmental Leadership:

Throughout his life and career, Bill Eaker has demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication to preserving and protecting the air quality and natural resources of Buncombe County and the surrounding region. He is passionate about the environment and understands the importance of creating solutions that have helped Buncombe County become more environmentally sustainable, leading to a more healthy and vibrant community.