

FY2021 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

Organization Name:	WNC Communities	
Project Name:	Agricultural and Community Service Initiatives	
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 1 (July 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 2 (October 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2021 - March 31, 2021)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 4 (April 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021)

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Overall project updates:	<p>Community Programs: We currently have 13 Buncombe County community centers that we work with throughout the year, and we are following up on requests from other interested community centers. In addition to the important food delivery and census work that our communities helped with during the pandemic, there are several who are hosting pop up vaccination clinics and others helping provide valuable communication regarding vaccinations. After a challenging year, most of the centers are back open and able to host events and provide community rentals and programs. We have hosted three zoom orientations for the roll out of our new Honors application and awards. Communities are excited about the new opportunities we will be providing going forward.</p> <p>George H.V. Cecil Scholarship: A total of 17 applications were received this year, a dramatic reduction in the number that has historically been submitted. This can only be attributed to COVID-19 and the fact that school was not in regular session during the months that the scholarship program is promoted by high school counselors. Only one application was submitted by a Buncombe County senior, and it was not awarded. For 2021, WNC Communities is awarding \$11,500 to eleven high school seniors and two \$1,000 recurring awards to previous scholars for their second year of study, for a total of \$13,500.</p> <p>Dairy and Beef Commissions The Dairy and Beef Commissions met in June to begin planning for the Jr. Dairy and Jr. Beef shows at the Mountain State Fair Youth Livestock Show. Area youth prepare throughout the year to exhibit their livestock. Not only do they develop leadership skills, but they also earn monetary premiums. We invest more than \$10,000 in our youth and these shows. Additionally, the Dairy Steer project is working with youth who would not normally have an opportunity to show livestock. These youth learn valuable animal husbandry skills, as well as develop leadership and presentation skills.</p> <p>Mountain Cattle Alliance: With the new operator of the WNC Regional Livestock Center in place, Mountain Cattle Alliance hosted an informational meeting with more than 80 producers attending. There is renewed interest in a variety of sales to improve producer profitability. The new WNC RLC operator is also providing various small animal, as well as horse sales to much community enthusiasm.</p>
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	<p>Activities by date:</p> <p>4/1/21— Beetle monitoring with Warren Wilson College students</p> <p>4/22/21—Participated in virtual Biltmore Forest Earth Day/Arbor Day event by presenting a short video about the town’s hemlocks and how community members can help protect this natural resource, followed by an in-person Q&A discussing Buncombe County’s Hemlock Preservation Project and the work of HRI in the county (24 attendees)</p> <p>4/23/21—Volunteer hemlock treatment day at Sandy Mush Game Land – Blackwell Springs East in honor of Earth Day and Arbor Day (81 hemlocks treated, 3 sign-ups, 1 attendee)</p> <p>5/6/21—Hemlock educational hike-n-bike trip on the Kitsuma Trail (4 sign-ups, 3 attendees)</p> <p>5/14/21—Volunteer hemlock treatment day at Sandy Mush Game Land – Blackwell Springs East cont. (62 hemlocks treated, 2 sign-ups, 2 attendees)</p> <p>5/27/21—Volunteer hemlock treatment day at NC Arboretum (143 hemlocks treated, 5 sign-ups, 3 attendees)</p> <p>6/14/21—Attended Big Ivy Community Meeting to introduce and promote upcoming demonstration event (22 attendees)</p> <p>6/24/21—Hemlock educational training for Christmount Assembly summer naturalist staff</p> <p>6/28/21—Hemlock treatment demonstration at Big Ivy Community Center (29 hemlocks treated, 24 sign-ups, 16 attendees)</p> <p>6/29/21—Hemlock educational walk at Asheville Botanical Gardens (11 sign-ups, 8 attendees)</p>
<p>COVID-19 impacts:</p>	<p>As more and more people are vaccinated, a turn towards normal operations is taking place. Vaccinated staff are back in the office and in-person meetings are slowly returning. Commission committee and member meetings are resuming with in person gatherings and plans for the future include: return to regular operation of the annual Jr. Beef Show Auction in August; return to the annual Beef Commission Steak Supper in and Happy Hollow Award Presentation in November; full attendance at the 72nd WNC Honors Awards in November. Of course, we will monitor the current health markers and adjust as necessary. One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic has been the addition of adding a virtual option for attendance to most events and meetings. We see this as a positive outcome for the future which will increase access to events and meetings and allow those who could not participate due to geography/mobility, have the option to participate through other virtual means</p>
<p>Activities related to increasing equity, diversity and inclusion:</p>	<p>The various programs launched to assist in the needs of community members due to COVID-19 allowed us to reach underserved communities in Buncombe County. Also, we were recently in contact with two African-American communities in Buncombe County who found out about the Honors program through COVID related activities and are interested in joining our WNC Honors Program. Director of Community and Agricultural Programs Terri Wells met with members of the East End and Burton Street Communities to orient them with the program. Also, the WNC AgOptions program is going to offer the 2022 grant application in Spanish, marking one of the first bilingual efforts put forth by WNC Communities. With a grant from Dogwood Health Trust, we will also explore a way to offer special AgOptions equity grants to farms owned by Black, indigenous and people of color.</p>

Activities related to increasing operational excellence:	With a strong staff in place to implement new programs, WNC Communities continues to put our “opportunity ready” mantra into action and serve more community members than ever. As our team expanded in January, the two new positions have become an integral part of our program of work and have been provided resources that are strengthening and improving current programs and allowing us to expand and increase impacts in Buncombe County and the rest of WNC.
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Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data)				Progress toward Annual Goal
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Please only include new data for the specific quarter						
# of Journey Scholarship recipients from Buncombe County	2	TBD	TBD	TDB	0	0
# of WNC Honors Awards to Buncombe communities	11	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	12
# of active members in Beef Cattle and Dairy Steer groups	220	100	50	50	75	275
Sales for Buncombe County at the WNC Regional Livestock Center	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 469,950.00	\$ 408,150.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 446,400.00	\$ 1,546,500.00
# of Hemlock sites in Buncombe County monitored	10	6	17	13	1	37

Comments:

A total of 17 Journey Scholarship applications were received this year, a dramatic reduction in the number that has historically been submitted. This can only be attributed to COVID-19 and the fact that school was not in regular session during the months that the scholarship program is promoted by high school counselors. Only one application was submitted by a Buncombe County senior, and it was not awarded.

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting Budget	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount Remaining
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 17,960	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,490	\$ -
Training						\$ -
Supplies/Materials						\$ -
Meetings						\$ -
Equipment/Furniture						\$ -
Printing/Marketing						\$ -
Licensing/Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions						\$ -
Client Support						\$ -
Contracts						\$ -
Professional Services						\$ -
Insurance and Bonds						\$ -
Building Maintenance						\$ -
Total	\$ 17,960	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,490	\$ 4,490	\$ -

Comments: