

Crossroads Chronicle

"Serving Cashiers, Glenville, Tuckasegee and Sapphire Valley, N.C."



Vol. 34, No. 36 • 75 cents

www.crossroadschronicle.com

Wednesday, September 8, 2010



Summit Charter unveils plans for

The Barn

Photos submitted

Above is the exterior plan for The Barn, a multi-use facility that will one day be built at Summit Charter School as soon as funds for the project are secured. Below is a rendering of the interior.

By Kelly Donaldson
Editor

For years, Summit Charter School has gone without a home court for basketball games, a facility of its own for volleyball practices, or an indoor location for graduation ceremonies, movies, theatrical plays, and so forth.

But at the school's Open House on Aug. 27, Summit director Jack Talmadge unveiled plans for The Barn, a multi-use facility that will be built on the school's campus as soon as proper funding has been secured.



Talmadge

"We've been talking about it for years," said Tal-



madge. "This is phase two of the master campus plan. When we moved up here in the spring of 2009 and there was so much excitement, we wanted to keep

that momentum going." Talmadge said the school got Steve Edgens to design the new barn facility. Edgens designed the new school as well.

"We wanted to keep The Barn's design like everything we've done up here," said Talmadge. "He

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Supreme court decision threatens trout streams

By David Joy
Staff Writer

In a loss for N.C. trout, water quality and sportsmen, the N.C. Supreme Court ruled six to one on Mon., Aug. 27 that a country club golf course's razing of forested buffer areas along sensitive trout streams and permanent enclosure of a N.C. mountain stream within a pipe was allowed despite a state law requiring "undisturbed" buffers to protect trout streams and water quality.

The Supreme Court decision reversed an earlier N.C. Appeals Court decision that a golf course constructed at Mountain Air Country Club in Yancey County violated state buffer requirements for trout streams.

"This decision slashes long-standing protections for North Carolina's valuable trout streams and threatens to turn every undisturbed trout buffer in North Carolina into a golf course or parking lot and every mountain stream into a piped ditch," said Blan Holman, a senior attorney at the Southern Environ-

mental Law Center.

Piping trout streams and denaturalizing the areas next to those streams is a recurring part of proposals for developments in North Carolina's Appalachian Mountains, especially for mountaintop luxury golf courses. The Mountain Air golf course impacts thousands of feet of stream because the mountainside trout stream running through it was reshaped and severely modified to accommodate fairways and greens.

Ultimately this decision could serve as precedence for future development leaving vulnerable thousands of miles of designated trout streams across the state. According to a dissenting opinion written by Justice Robin E. Hudson, the majority decision unilaterally removes trout stream protections that the General Assembly enacted decades ago.

More particularly, many worry that this decision could affect the few remaining streams that hold spawning populations of Southern

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Photo by David Joy/Staff

Dr. Barbara Carlton feeds a big native brook trout she's named "Methuselah" along Mill Creek in Chinquapin.

WCU fall foliage forecaster predicts colorful autumn

From staff reports

Visitors to Western North Carolina's mountains can look forward to a vibrant display of color this autumn, predicts Kathy Mathews, Western Carolina University's fearless fall foliage forecaster.

That's because weather conditions during the spring and summer point to an above-average fall color show, said Mathews, WCU associate professor of biology specializing in plant

systematics.

"It's been a hot year in North Carolina, with above-average temperatures this summer. Rainfall has been slightly less than average during the spring and summer. These are two factors I look at when thinking



Mathews

about the timing and quality of fall leaf color change in the mountains," Mathews said.

"While your garden may not have fared so well because of the soaring temperatures in June and July, the well-established trees and shrubs of our forests do not appear to have been adversely affected. All of which should lead to very nice color change this Oc-

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Photo by Kelly Donaldson/Staff

Above is a fall scene from the edge of Lake Glenville in 2009.

Fleas cause community center, preschool to close doors

By David Joy
Staff Writer

A recent infestation of fleas at both the Cashiers Community Center and Hampton Preschool caused

both buildings to briefly close their doors for business. More than mere bites, the infestation has left many in the community pointing fingers at who is to blame.

Cashiers resident Monica Hernandez has a son enrolled at Hampton and said that the infestation was "absolutely horrible."

"What happened was that

I was on my way to work on Thursday (Aug. 27) and I had just dropped my son off at Hampton Preschool, and they called and told me they were having to close

the school down," Hernandez said. "When I asked why they were having to close the school down, they said that there was a guinea pig show next door and

that someone had brought a guinea pig in and that the whole place was infested with fleas.

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TROUT: Court decision could affect trout streams across N.C.

from Page 1A

Appalachian brook trout, the only native trout species in Appalachia, which differ genetically on a sub-species level from the northern strand of brook trout. These Appalachian brook trout have been in Southern Appalachia since the last Ice Age, over 10,000 years ago.

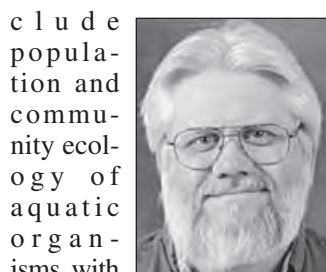
Dickie Howard, the president of the Tuckasee Chapter of Trout Unlimited, says that the native trout are especially vulnerable to developmental changes in the ecosystem.

"I'm no fisheries biologist, but anybody who has handled trout before recognizes just how much more delicate a native brook trout is in terms of what they have to have in order to survive," Howard said. "Water clarity, pH levels, water temperatures, or whatever it is, with browns and rainbows it's just an entirely different ballgame. The brook trout have to have optimal numbers to not only survive, but to spawn. The spawning is the thing; if it's not a healthy fish then you're just not going to have a next generation."

"Every factor that you talk about in terms of what a trout has to have, it is just much more important for a native brook trout than it is for a brown or for a rainbow," Howard continued. "A lot of people don't understand that because so many of the brook trout that they see are hatchery-brood fish and that is an entirely different fish than what we have in the mountains."

Dr. Thomas Martin is an Associate Professor and Associate Department Head for the Biology Department at Western Carolina University.

His research interests in-



Martin

clude population and community ecology of aquatic organisms, with particular emphasis on stream fish movement and habitat fragmentation.

He says that such construction could affect trout populations in three ways: sedimentation, water temperature, and the introduction of foreign nutrients.

"Sedimentation is one of the biggest pollutants that they face," Martin said. "Most fish that live in streams will place their eggs in the gravel. They really do look for places where there are spaces in between the individual rocks that have gravel, so that the eggs can be safe from predators and have enough water flow to keep them oxygenated. If you get runoff that's carrying fine sediment, it fills in all of those spaces then it suffocates the eggs."

The removal of trees and vegetation in buffer areas around the stream banks will undoubtedly increase the amount of runoff into the stream, but Martin added that this will allow more light to enter the water which in turn will raise water temperatures and create more aquatic life to deplete oxygen levels.

"The more open spaces you have the warmer the water's going to be, and eventually you are going to have the water be too warm for the fish to be comfortable there," Martin explained.

"Trout in general don't like warm water. Warm water doesn't hold oxygen as well,

and they are very sensitive to low oxygen. They are ectotherms, or they are whatever temperature the water is that they are in. So when the water temperatures rise it speeds up their entire metabolism. So they actually have to eat more in order to stay the same weight at warmer temperatures.

"Raising the summer temperature of a stream from 18 degrees centigrade (64.4 F), or even 20 degrees centigrade (68 F) in the summertime, up to 23 or 24 degrees centigrade (73.4 or 75.2 F) has a huge affect on the fish," Martin explained. "They have to eat a whole lot more. Trout can actually survive short periods of temperatures all the way up to 27 or 28 degrees centigrade (80.6 to 82.4 F). But it's just like you can survive someone flushing the toilet while you're in the shower for a short time, but you're certainly not going to stay there. They have to work too hard and eat too much so they are going to leave to try and find cooler water."

Lastly, Martin says that golf courses in particular are likely to use fertilizers that will move into the stream and have an adverse effect.

"Another thing to think about with a golf course in particular is the addition of nutrients to the stream and what that might do to it," Martin said. "That is going to exacerbate the open canopy. If it's like most golf courses that I've seen they are going to want nice green grass all the way up to the stream, which means that it is going to be fertilized and that will find it's way into the stream. It's going to mean that there is more plant production in the stream and all



Photo by David Joy/Staff

Southern Appalachian brook trout, which have called Appalachia home for over 10,000 years, are even more susceptible to encroaching development than introduced trout such as rainbows, browns, and northern-strand brook trout.

of those things use up more oxygen."

While all development against the banks will have a negative effect on the trout populations, some think that responsible development entails taking the necessary precautions to insure the livelihood of indigenous species. Dr. Barbara Carlton, whose children own and operate the Chinquapin development on Breedlove Road, says that protecting the wildlife should be all developers main concern.

"We have the headwaters of Robinson Creek and Packs Creek on the property," Carlton said. "What we did was put 700 acres in a conservation easement that houses most of those watersheds. That's the first thing we did was put those 700 acres in place out of the 2000 total acres. Before they could put a bulldozer or backhoe in here to build the roads, they had to put in silt fences to stop any runoff from reaching those streams."

"Our primary objective is to protect the integrity of this property, its watersheds, its wildlife, and all of the ecosystems it entails," Carlton

continued. "You can't put it back once you've destroyed it, and that's particularly true in the mountains. I made it clear to the developer that the family was not going to back off on any protection for the streams because I was especially concerned with protecting the brookies."

"You can develop in an environmentally sensitive area if you have a non-paid, bureaucratic, warrior to watch every move that the developers make," Carlton concluded. "A lot of what's being done is what I would call an environmental holocaust."

The N.C. General Assembly enacted the trout buffer requirement in 1989.

That legislative effort was led by Western North Carolina legislators seeking to give trout streams particularly strong buffer protections because trout require clean, cold water to thrive, and are impacted severely by the increased silt and temperature from streamside development.

(Parts of this story were taken from a recent press release by the Southern Environmental Law Center.)

FALL: Cont.

from Page 1A

tober," she said.

Mathews believes that the formation of ample yellow, orange and red pigments in the leaves seems to correlate with dry weather throughout the year. The drier the climate, the more brilliant the fall leaves tend to be, she said.

"I predict this fall color change will be variable throughout the southern mountains, but on the whole we should expect to see rich and attractive color change this season," she said.

Cooling temperatures during the fall contribute to the decomposition of chlorophyll, the chemical that gives leaves their green color in spring and summer. As chlorophyll breaks down, yellow pigments – always present in the leaves, but masked by the green of chlorophyll – are revealed, and new red pigments are produced.

Although peak fall color typically occurs during the third week of October, the peak may arrive a bit later this year, perhaps more toward the end of October, because of the warm temperatures, Mathews said.

"Peak color corresponds to the first frost date of the year," she said. "If frost comes later than usual, so will the peak color change of the leaves."

The color change should begin at the higher mountain elevations in late September and continue through mid-November in the lower levels of WNC.

"Look for the earliest color change to take place on the sourwoods and dogwoods, which both turn red, as well as the tulip poplars, which become yellow but tend to turn brown early," Mathews said. "Colorful maples, with hues of red, orange and yellow, and birches, which turn yellow, bring us into the peak period. Finally, oaks turn orange and red to round out the later color change in the season."

FLEAS: Infestation causes temporary closings

from Page 1A

"I thought that this was absolutely ridiculous, and I had to take a whole day off of work and then I get my son home and he has over 15 flea bites," Hernandez continued. "I called the Health Department wondering why in the world this happened in the first place. I called the doctor about it and they told me to watch the bites, and I also took pictures of the bites for the Health Department because it was all inside of his legs."

Hampton Preschool Director Misty Berry said that the school did everything that they could to insure the safety of the children as soon as the fleas were noticed.

"The Health Department didn't close down the school, we did," Berry said. "The Community Center had a guinea pig show and they were infested with fleas. After about a week and a half we started noticing children with bites on the playground. Then we started noticing some inside the center. As soon as we started noticing them inside the center last Thursday morning (Aug. 27), we immediately closed, contacted parents, and had parents come and pick their children up, because we had to think of the children's safety first. "We had Terminex come in and spray," Berry explained. "The reason we were closed on Friday was because the staff came in and had to clean all of the toys thoroughly before the children came back because of the chemicals that were sprayed. Everything is fine now and we reopened on Monday (Aug. 30)."

Berry went on to say that the Community Center had taken responsibility for the infestation and had paid for the Terminex extermination. However, Berry also said that the Community Center had "contacted the

people who held the guinea pig show and they did not accept any responsibility," adding that according to the vendors "guinea pigs don't carry fleas."

Michael Hopkins, manager of the Cashiers Community Center, agreed that the infestation came from the guinea pig show that was held Sat., Aug. 14.

"We had a guinea pig show up here a couple of weeks ago and I'm assuming that the guinea pigs had brought some fleas into the building and they just moved their way from the gym over to the daycare," Hopkins said. "It just moved from the Community Center gym and made its way over to the daycare."

While both Hopkins and Berry agree that the guinea pig show was to blame for the infestation, those participating in the annual event do not believe that the guinea pigs, also called cavies, were to blame.

Glenville resident Margo Purdy, who also serves as the secretary and treasurer for the North Carolina Cavy Breeders Association, says that the animals were all inspected multiple times and that there is a much more likely cause.

"With the way the show goes, each animal entered into the show is actually judged two different times by two different people," Purdy said. "That means that every animal had a hands-on examination twice during the day, and one of the things that is looked for in the judging as either a disqualification or elimination is external parasites. "So they are actually looking for those, although not fleas specifically, in their examinations," Purdy continued. "I think that the common link to the fleas comes from the stray dogs, because they wander back and forth through that corridor

extensively."

After first receiving notice from the Community Center about the incident, Purdy began contacting all of the exhibitors at the show. Purdy ultimately received 10 emails in return, one of which was from a veterinarian at the show who agrees that the guinea pigs were not to blame.

In the e-mail, Valerie Blaes, a veterinarian in Columbia, S.C. and a cavy breeder stated:

"The dogs hanging around the building could easily have seeded the place just by lying right outside the doors or in that alcove seeking shelter," Blaes explained. "I can't even imagine that one exhibitor with a flea problem at home, carrying fleas along in a carrier of a magnitude required to seed a whole building that quickly, would not have had fleas noticed on the show cavies. "From the time fleas are in-

troduced to an area to the time that a flea infestation is manifest to the extent requiring environmental treatment takes a minimum of 3 to 5 weeks with optimal conditions—for a handful of fleas to lay eggs, hatch, breed, lay eggs again, and hatch out again in numbers great enough to be noticed," Blaes concluded.

In a final declarative letter written on September 2, Margo Purdy wrote to Manager Michael Hopkins that, "No animals or people had fleas on them during the show."

Despite what may or may not have caused the infestation at both the Community Center and Hampton Preschool, both places have now reopened their doors flea free. It has yet to be decided whether or not the annual Guinea Pig Show will be held at the Cashiers Community Center in the future.

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