

## Passive Recreation Lands: Applications Overview

Project	Total Score	Type	Funding Request	Applicant
33+/- Acres on Sandhill Road	391.25	Acquisition	\$1,633,400	Balsam Gardens
Ridgecrest Connector	386.25	Improvements	\$705,000	Town of Black Mountain
Deaverview Mountain	381.25	Acquisition	\$1,000,000	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
Woodmen Trailhead and Educational Park	368.75	Acquisition & Improvements	\$1,638,950	Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa
Warren Wilson College Lands	347.5	Improvements	\$141,580	Warren Wilson College
Riverside Park	341.25	Improvements	\$3,368,660	Town of Woodfin
Gateway Park	337.5	Improvements	\$200,000	Riverlink
Worx Community Forest Trail Development	333.75	Improvements	\$756,800	Camp Grier
Hominy Creek Greenway Trail Improvements	331.25	Improvements	\$312,834	Asheville Greenworks
Weaverville Watershed Trails and Wildlife Preserve	292.5	Improvements	\$1,072,030	Town of Weaverville
Haw Creek Park Greenway	282.5	Improvements	\$102,182	Haw Creek Community Association

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## Project: 33 Acres on Sandhill Road

**Applicant:** Balsam Gardens

**Link:** [33 acres on Sandhill RoadPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$1,633,400

**Project Type:** Acquisition

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4.5	90
Feasibility	20	3.5	70
Accessibility	15	3.5	52.5
Equity	15	4.25	63.75
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3.5	35
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	4	40
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	4.25	21.25
Safety	5	3.75	18.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31.25</b>	<b>391.25</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** Yes – 33 Acres

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes – 33 Acres

### Project Description

“The purpose of this project is the acquisition of 33 acres of riparian land consisting of approximately a mile of creek frontage along Hominy Creek by Buncombe County in order to preserve the land as open space, protect the sensitive watershed, provide safe and easy access to nature for County residents, including low- and moderate-income residents, as well as ensure the success of the proposed [Enka Heritage Trail] greenway.”

### Staff Notes

- This application proposes that Buncombe County purchase and manage the 33-acre property, which is not currently open to the public nor under conservation.
- The current landowner has been working with Mountain True for creek bank restoration.
- The landowner is also contributing a permanent conservation easement along the creek bank.
- This project is in alignment with a possible extension of the County’s Enka Heritage Trail.
- The portion of the parcel potentially being sold to a neighbor does not interfere with potential park plans for the property.

## Project: Deaverview Mountain

**Applicant:** Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

**Link:** [Deaverview MountainPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$1,00,000

**Project Type:** Acquisition

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4.5	90
Feasibility	20	3.25	65
Accessibility	15	3.25	48.75
Equity	15	4.5	67.5
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3.5	35
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	4.25	42.5
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3.25	16.25
Safety	5	3.25	16.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29.75</b>	<b>381.25</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** Yes – 345 Acres

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes – 345 Acres

### Project Summary

“This grant will unlock other funding sources to enable SAHC to purchase the 345-acre Deaverview Mountain property, in order to create a new public park. SAHC will transfer the property to Buncombe County, who will be the long-term owner and manager of the park. It will be the county’s largest park, and the only immersive nature experience for the surrounding communities. Deaverview Mountain’s peak is visible throughout. It contains a network of trails leading to a stunning 180-degree view of the city and surrounding mountains. The park will provide passive outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking, nature viewing and picnicking. The property’s urban location will serve lower income populations that have limited or no access to hiking or long-range scenic views of this quality. With the nearest bus stop only 1/4 mile away, and the potential to extend the bus line to Deaverview Mountain, this project will increase equitable access for people without personal transportation. Deaverview Mountain is the last large undeveloped tract in West Asheville. The bond funds will leverage federal, state and private grants to purchase the property. The purchase will save it from development, protect wildlife habitat and water quality, and create the county’s largest public park to date in a location that is absent public recreation opportunities of this scale. Users of the park will include the neighboring community, Asheville residents, and visitors to Buncombe County.”

### Staff Notes

- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is seeking Bond funds towards their purchase of Deaverview Mountain from a private conservation-minded buyer. Once the acquisition is complete, SAHC intends to transfer ownership to Buncombe County to own and manage the property as a public park. Buncombe would manage and maintain the park.
- Buncombe County commissioners have expressed interest in setting aside Open Space Bond funds towards the development of the park.

## Project: Gateway Park

**Applicant:** Riverlink

**Link:** [Gateway Park Resurrecting a historic park on Riverside DrivePacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$200,000

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4	80
Feasibility	20	2.75	55
Accessibility	15	3.5	52.5
Equity	15	3	45
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3.5	35
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	3.75	37.5
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3	15
Safety	5	3.5	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>337.5</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes – 1.2 Acres

### Project Description

“This request will support the creation of a new, climate-resilient park in a location that is currently inaccessible to the public. The future Gateway Park represents a convergence of opportunity for wildlife viewing accessible via multi-modal transit along the French Broad River. Three major bike and pedestrian projects leading to the site are in development now. These projects—one each planned by NC Department of Transportation, Buncombe County and the City of Asheville—will vastly improve connectivity & safe bike/pedestrian transit by expanding the existing greenway network, highlighting this property’s significance as a green gateway. RiverLink’s Gateway Park will be the only public greenspace in the busy 2.5-mile corridor between the River Arts District (RAD) and Woodfin’s Silver-Line Park. This project has strong alignment with Bond Fund goals, as this riverside green space prioritizes natural resource protection and the preservation of mature wildlife habitat and ecosystem services including shade, stormwater processing, flood mitigation, and a functional riparian zone—in contrast to the majority of current land uses in this industrial corridor. This proposal seeks the final funding needed to develop a partly wooded public park in the French Broad River corridor. Natural green spaces like these increase the quality of life for Buncombe residents by providing opportunities to enjoy wildlife sightings and passive recreation in proximity to places we live, work and play.”

### Staff Notes

- Gateway Park was also recently awarded TDA LIFT funds.
- As part of the TDA application, the project included a match from a private donor. If awarded Bond funds, the organization would like to reserve part of the private donor match for other projects.
- Riverlink will own and manage the park.

## Project: Haw Creek Park Greenway

**Applicant:** Haw Creek Community Association

**Link:** [Haw Creek Park GreenwayPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$102,182

**Project Type:** Combination

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	3.75	75
Feasibility	20	2.75	55
Accessibility	15	2.5	37.5
Equity	15	2	30
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	2.75	27.5
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	3	30
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	2.5	12.5
Safety	5	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22.25</b>	<b>282.5</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** Yes – 1 Acre

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes – 1 Acre

### Project Description

“The group that brought the community Haw Creek Park and Masters Park asks for your support to bring a nature path to the Haw Creek valley. It will run through a bucolic stretch alongside our namesake Haw Creek allowing, for the first time, public access to the creek. The greenway will link treasured community attractions — the East Asheville Public Library, Haw Creek Park, our charming commercial area – with the surrounding residential area and schools. Anticipated outcomes include restoring an invasive-choked area to its natural habitat, offering residents a place to enjoy a pleasant walk-in nature to get to community destinations. Residents and visitors could also just stop by for a calm respite amidst the most densely populated area of our valley. Most of the funding will be used to improve the land, including building a path, constructing a footbridge and split rail fencing, removing rampant invasives, and replanting with native plants to control erosion and reestablish habitat. Some funds will be used for drafting, recording, and other fees for obtaining an easement on donated land. Typical users will include parents pushing strollers or chasing after toddlers, dog walkers, older folks stretching their legs, professionals re-centering themselves in nature between hectic meetings, kids biking to the nearby library or burger place, youth/school groups and individuals eager to learn more about creek ecology, and families enjoying time together outdoors.”

### Staff Notes

- The Community Associate recently did a fundraising effort to raise roughly \$15K from community members.
- The project would create a 585-foot nature path on a small parcel currently owned in part by a private landowner and in part by the City of Asheville.

## Project: Hominy Creek Greenway Trail Improvement

**Applicant:** Asheville Greenworks

**Link:** [Hominy Creek Greenway Trail Improvement and Ecological Restoration Packet.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$312,834

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4	80
Feasibility	20	3	60
Accessibility	15	3.5	52.5
Equity	15	3	45
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3.5	35
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	2.5	25
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3.5	17.5
Safety	5	3.25	16.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26.25</b>	<b>331.25</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** No

### Project Description

“This project has two goals: to complete the restoration of a sustainable natural surface trail and to invest in the ongoing ecological restoration and maintenance of the 12-acre green space known as the Hominy Creek Greenway, a City of Asheville park. This project requests funds to restore 0.4 miles of natural surface trail and to a five-year ecological restoration plan developed in partnership with EcoForesters, an Asheville based nonprofit organization. The objective of the trail project is to redesign, improve, and reroute a 0.4-mile section of trail to create a sustainable pathway that reduces erosion and improves the trail user experience. The plan involves raising the trail in several areas; creating swales, levies, and other elements to capture, store and redirect rainfall and runoff. The project will link two recently completed trail projects (September 2021/March 2024) that improved 40% of the Greenway ⅔ mile trail’s surface. The project also seeks to address the infestation of non-native invasive plant species in the riparian buffer zones and surrounding forest along the Hominy Creek Greenway. This project seeks a more aggressive, long-term approach to managing invasive species and replacing them with native grasses, shrubs and trees. The combination of both projects will expand access to residents that are less likely to access urban green spaces because of traditional limitations.”

### Staff Notes

- The Hominy Creek Greenway is owned and managed by City of Asheville.
- Asheville Greenworks is the fiscal agent for Friends of Hominy Creek, who is managing the project.

## Project: Warren Wilson College Trails

**Applicant:** Warren Wilson College

**Link:** [Improving Public Access and Passive Recreation Use of Warren Wilson College LandsPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$141,580

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	3.75	75
Feasibility	20	4	80
Accessibility	15	2.25	33.75
Equity	15	3.25	48.75
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	4	40
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	3.25	32.5
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3.75	18.75
Safety	5	3.75	18.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>347.5</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** No

### Project Description

“Warren Wilson College owns 1005 acres of forest and agricultural land in Buncombe County, all of which have been open to the public for recreational use for decades. The College's 17 miles of farm and forest roads and forest single track trails are used extensively by county residents for hiking, dog walking, birding, wildlife viewing, photography, swimming and other passive recreational pursuits. The College also has a long history of inviting county residents onto our land for workshops, demonstrations and interpretive hikes that educate public on the natural history of the area as well as conservation and management of natural resources. Despite this open access, the College has never asked the county or state for funding to manage and improve the infrastructure that provides public access to our land. All costs of managing the roads and trails used by the public have come from the College with some minor capacity provided by generous neighbors. Requested bond funds will be used to upgrade and improve the College's road and trail system used extensively by the public for passive recreation. The majority of our roads and trails are in serious need of grading and resurfacing due to significant use. This work will improve user safety, access and quality of experience for county residents using College lands for passive recreation activities and will allow Warren Wilson College to continue welcoming county residents to campus and providing these opportunities.”

### Staff Notes

- The College intends to manage and maintain the trails/roads improvements through their current land management program, including use of their Farm and Forestry Crews.

## Project: Ridgecrest Connector

**Applicant:** Town of Black Mountain

**Link:** [Ridgecrest ConnectorPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$705,000

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4.25	85
Feasibility	20	3.75	75
Accessibility	15	4	60
Equity	15	3.75	56.25
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3.75	37.5
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	3.75	37.5
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3.75	18.75
Safety	5	3.25	16.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30.25</b>	<b>386.25</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes

### Project Description

“The Ridgecrest Connector is a multi-use path that will serve as a critical connection for the Fonta Flora State Trail. The project is available to the public at all times. The requested bond funding will pay for construction. It will increase the quality of life for residents of east Black Mountain by providing opportunities for passive recreation and also support the Town's economic development focused on recreation and the outdoors.”

### Staff Notes

- The proposed project is for a pathway connecting to a 24-acre future park.
- The Town claims they will provide for management and maintenance of their property in their Capital Improvement Plan.



## Project: Riverside Park

**Applicant:** Town of Woodfin

**Link:** [Riverside Park ImprovementPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$3,368,660

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	3.5	70
Feasibility	20	3	60
Accessibility	15	3.75	56.25
Equity	15	3.25	48.75
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3.5	35
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	4	40
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	2.75	13.75
Safety	5	3.5	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27.25</b>	<b>341.25</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes - 8

### Project Description

“Riverside Park was Woodfin’s first park on the French Broad River. A beloved community resource for more than twenty years, it is now the centerpiece of the Woodfin Greenway & Blueway (WGB), which will establish a regional outdoor recreation destination in Western North Carolina. The WGB plan includes 5 miles of new greenways connecting Silver-Line and Riverside Parks in Woodfin and beyond to Asheville, an in-stream whitewater feature (“Taylor’s Wave”) adjacent to an expanded Riverside Park, and riparian conservation measures. The final steps in WGB park construction include: 1) improvement of the existing facilities at Riverside Park; 2) enhancements to user experiences in the expansion area; and 3) a passive river user/aquatic life channel bypassing Taylor’s Wave. As the only components not yet fully funded, these improvements align perfectly with the Open Space Bond’s goals. Today, Riverside Park is primarily used by Woodfin residents for walking, jogging, fishing and picnicking. It is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty (U.S. DOT) and its tables, benches, walking paths and other amenities are overdue for renovation. Open Space Bond funding would support passive recreation infrastructure throughout the park; the Taylor’s Wave bypass; and measures to control flooding, preserve water quality and restore native flora. These improvements will enhance the quality of life for Woodfin’s diverse population and protect a vital natural resource.”

### Staff Notes

- The Riverside Park is currently open to the public. The proposed project would include improvements to the park.

## Project: Weaverville Watershed

**Applicant:** Town of Weaverville

**Link:** [Weaverville Watershed Trails and Wildlife PreservePacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$1,072,030

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4	80
Feasibility	20	2.75	55
Accessibility	15	2.5	37.5
Equity	15	2.75	41.25
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	2.5	25
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	2.25	22.5
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3.25	16.25
Safety	5	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>292.5</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes - 309

### Project Description

“The Town of Weaverville owns a 309-acre watershed that is protected under a conservation easement with the North Carolina Land and Water Fund. The property is forested with mature hardwood-dominant forest types providing long-range views, and quiet forest space. The objective of this project is to protect and manage natural resources while allowing for public passive recreational, scientific, educational, and cultural uses that meet the requirements of the conservation easement and this Open Space Bond. The Town has a professionally-designed trail master plan that identifies over 9 miles of potential trails. The trail design utilizes an existing network of old logging roads and adds trails throughout the property with a minimal impact approach. Public access will be possible from cyclist-friendly Elk Mountain Scenic Highway where we also plan to create a small parking area. The existing water supply equipment and reservoir will be fenced off to protect the Town’s equipment and ensure public safety. The bond funding would be used to pay for trail construction, parking area creation, installation of reservoir fencing, and initial trail system maintenance. The project is perfectly aligned with the goals of the Open Space Bond and would be an asset to Buncombe County residents. It will help protect the watershed and give Buncombe County access to a unique multiuse trail system unlike any other in the, improving residents’ quality of life and access to outdoor recreation.”

### Staff Notes

- The land for the proposed project is currently owned by the Town of Woodfin and is under a conservation easement that prohibits industrial, commercial, and agricultural use. Currently, the land is not open to the public.
- The Town would be responsible for managing and maintaining the property.
- The budget currently includes \$220,000 for maintenance, through 2029. “Long-term operating costs” are not allowable under the Bond guidelines, possibly requiring an adjustment to the budget.

## Project: Woodmen Trailhead

**Applicant:** Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa

**Link:** [Woodmen Trailhead Educational ParkPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$1,638,950

**Project Type:** Acquisition & Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4.25	85
Feasibility	20	3.5	70
Accessibility	15	3.25	48.75
Equity	15	4.25	63.75
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3	30
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	3	30
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	4.5	22.5
Safety	5	3.75	18.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>368.75</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** Yes - 3

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes - 3

### Project Description

“The purpose of this project is to provide access for the future Fonta Flora State Trail (FFST), and to build a riverside pocket park for the residents of Swannanoa and users of the FFST. The bond funds would be used to purchase land that is located along the proposed future route of the FFST and could serve as part of the official greenway alignment. Much attention has been focused on the French Broad River in recent years, while the Swannanoa River — particularly the section that runs through the Swannanoa community — has been largely ignored. An investment of bond funding in this project will increase awareness and appreciation of this overlooked but critically important water resource. These properties are within close proximity to Swannanoa’s business center, Grovemont Park and the surrounding Grovemont neighborhood, and the newly-announced Beacon Village project, which will feature a 1.5-mile walking path, world class bike park, and other outdoor recreation amenities. Although Swannanoa is home to beautiful mountains, significant tracts of undeveloped land, and a river that bears its name, there have been very few conservation efforts to protect, preserve and enhance these assets. Using bond funds for the purposes outlined in this application will demonstrate a commitment to the eastern part of the county, as well as a recognition of the importance of these natural assets, not only to Swannanoa, but to all residents of Buncombe County and the surrounding region.”

### Staff Notes

- This property is currently in a floodplain area currently considered important by County Planning for floodplain protection.
- The project would also provide connectivity to other County-owned floodplain properties.
- The proposed trail is alignment with the Fonta Flora State Trail plans, which the County has passed a resolution to support.
- The proposed project would be County owned and managed.

## Project: Worx Community Forest

**Applicator:** Camp Grier

**Link:** [Worx Community Forest Trail DevelopmentPacket.pdf](#)

**Funding Request:** \$756,800

**Project Type:** Improvements

### Score

Criteria	Weight	Average Score	Total Points (Max 500)
Conservation and Environmental Impact	20	4	80
Feasibility	20	3.5	70
Accessibility	15	2.75	41.25
Equity	15	3	45
Long-Term Management and Maintenance	10	3	30
Costs and Leveraged Funding	10	3.5	35
Alignment with County Plans/Priorities	5	3.25	16.25
Safety	5	3.25	16.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26.25</b>	<b>333.75</b>

**Will this project place new acreage under conservation?** No

**Will this project open new acreage for public use?** Yes - 220

### Project Description

“Bond Funds are being requested to develop 11 miles of multi-use natural surface trails on the Worx Community Forest in Fairview. The Worx Community Forest is a 225-acre conservation project surrounding the Worx Campus, a 35-acre, career connected learning campus for middle and high school students in Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools. The purpose of the project is to provide a recreation asset to the residents of Fairview and an out of school resource for young people in Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools. This region of Fairview is in a recreation shadow with no public hiking or biking trails available to community residents. The Worx Community Forest will add a hiking and mountain biking option for community residents in the southeast portion of Buncombe County. The Worx trail proposal builds on a successful \$1.5MM conservation effort by Conserving Carolina and will result in a 250-acre community conservation, recreation, and educational asset that will benefit not only the residents of Fairview but also the young people of Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools in perpetuity. The primary users of the property will be local residents of Fairview and public-school students in Asheville and Buncombe County Schools. Trails at the Worx Forest will be designed for a beginner and intermediate hiking and mountain biking user experience. The primary user will be those seeking a quiet walk on a weekday or an easy mountain bike experience with their family.”

### Staff Notes

- The Project budget includes \$83,000 for engineering and administrative costs, which are not permissible under the guidelines. These funds cannot be included in an award, if granted.
- Worx has also received Buncombe County conservation easement funding totaling \$124,000 in FY23 and \$130,000 in FY24. The easement is held by Conserving Carolina and was not funded from Open Space Bond proceeds.