

The Conservation Exchange at Warren Wilson College

*Sharing Ideas, Passion and Resources for
Innovative Land Stewardship*

Winter 2020:15

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly" - MLK.

A Special Event you Won't Want to Miss!

Swannanoa Tunnel as a Place & a Song: Critical Regionalism, Race, and Retelling a Story of Appalachian Industrialization

Thursday February 6th
@7pm, Boon Hall

Join Warren Wilson College professors Jeff Keith and Kevin Kehrberg as they present on the musical legacies extending from the late nineteenth century construction of the Swannanoa Tunnel. Part song profile and part historical lecture, this

presentation will demonstrate how the song "Swannanoa Tunnel" (also known as "Asheville Junction") has traveled through folk and popular culture in ways that, among other things, obscure the vital role African Americans performed in the history of Western North Carolina--particularly in the context of the Western North Carolina Railroad. Come hear a lecture and some music as a way to learn about topics such as 1870s Appalachia, railroad construction, the convict labor system, work songs, and the racial politics of American folk music.



Mark Your Calendars!



Join Botanist and WWC Biology Professor Dr. Amy Boyd for a Native Wildflower Workshop

Saturday, April 11 9am-3pm (Raindate April 12)

Trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpits, Solomon's seal, chickweed---our woodland understories are graced with a diversity of wildflowers in the spring months, before the trees leaf out. If you're interested in getting to know them better and being able to identify them yourself, but need to start at the beginning, this workshop is for you!

We'll go over basic terminology and characteristics, learn to use a field guide and key, and spend our day in the Warren Wilson College Forest, practicing identification in the field.

This workshop has a registration fee of \$40/person.
Space is limited to 15 participants

[Workshop Registration](#)

Spring Meat Sale at The College Farm - March 21st

Take the opportunity to purchase grass-fed beef and pasture-raised pork as well as specialty cured meats. This is a great way to support local, student-powered agriculture while getting some tasty meat products. Pre-ordering is preferred and you can get more information at meats@warren-wilson.edu. WWC Craft, Forestry and Garden Crews will also be there with artisan and specialty products for sale.



Land Resources Receives Funding for Long-term Soil Carbon Monitoring on the College Farm

Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services while maintaining economic sustainability. Capturing

and storing soil carbon is one of the priorities of regenerative agriculture and a necessary tool in addressing climate change. The College is committed to developing, implementing and sharing land management practices that contribute to climate mitigation and carbon sequestration. This research will allow us to create a baseline inventory of current carbon contained in our agricultural fields that can be used to assess the effects of future management innovations - with an eye towards carbon capture. The monitoring system will provide applied learning opportunities for our

agriculture students and results will be shared with private and public stakeholders throughout the region. We want to thank Howell Ferguson and Sharon Maxwell-Ferguson for their generous gift and their commitment to finding climate solutions!



Meet our New College Farm Manager!

A native of the Kansas plains, Blair Thompson has been working in the regenerative and sustainable agricultural field since 2006. After interning on several farms in Indiana and Michigan with a broad focus on crops and livestock, he found his interest in an ecosystems approach to agriculture most uniquely fulfilled in the interaction between animals and the land. For the past decade he has worked in livestock and land management in Northern California. He has most recently been responsible for livestock production at Hidden Villa, an educational farm and wilderness preserve in the Bay Area. In addition to wrangling the livestock, while at Hidden Villa he built and stewarded an adult food and farming initiative focused on growing agricultural literacy among the ranch's Silicon Valley community. He is particularly excited to see folks new to the field discover the potential of partnering with livestock to achieve land management and production goals. He is thrilled to be joining the Warren Wilson community in the capacity of Farm Manager and is looking forward to fostering many fruitful collaborations and opportunities around the Farm and with the regional community. Joining Blair in this new endeavor is his wife Talia, and their daughters Reed and Evan. Join us in welcoming Blair to the College - we are excited to begin working with him!

River Cane Conservation at Warren Wilson College

River cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) is a native bamboo species that grows along rivers and streams throughout western North Carolina and the Southeast. River cane provides habitat for wildlife, improves water quality and is a culturally significant resource for Native Americans, especially the Cherokee. Once

dominating floodplains and lowlands through the region, the species now occupies a small fraction of its historical range. Working with **Restoration Systems**, we've conserved a large population of cane that occupied an area that was altered within the current stream mitigation easement. Planting stock was distributed to **Eastern Band of Cherokee, Asheville Greenworks, Riverlink, TNC, Conserving Carolina, Veterans Healing Farm** and **Rockingham Community College** for individual river cane restoration projects. Land Resources has also transferred a portion of the



population to a large propagation field which will provide planting stock for future restoration efforts throughout Western North Carolina.



WWC Experiential Learning and Research Contribute to Public Health and Habitat Preservation

While collecting water samples in the fall for [Dr. Mark Brenner's](#) Aquatic Ecology class, students identified a toxic algae bloom in Beaver Lake, the same

condition that has led to several dog fatalities in other parts of NC. Dr. Brenner notified state officials and precautions were taken to protect public health in the community. Student Kaitlyn Zinnecker said she's grateful that her class' hands-on learning led to its life-saving discovery, "It's a really good opportunity to get out there, see that this is there and warn the public about it".

Biology professor [Amy Boyd](#) has been working for years inventorying the floral of the Sandy Bottom Preserve along NC 191 near Bent Creek. The wetland there is classified as a "montane floodplain slough forest", a rare habitat type that is home to a host of rare flora and fauna. Along with WWC student Adel Preusser, Dr. Boyd identified 221 species of vascular plants at the site, and their work could lead to greater legal protection for this unique wetland community. The Inventory results can be found in [Castanea](#): The Journal of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society, 2016, 81(4).

Interested in Giving to The Conservation Exchange?

Your generous gift will go towards helping us maintain and improve the recreation, research and education infrastructures of our land and will support continued outreach opportunities for the Warren Wilson College Conservation Community. To give, go to the link below, choose "**Other**" and designate "**Conservation Exchange**" on the form. Thank you for being part of our Conservation Community!

Give to the Conservation Exchange



Conservation Exchange at WWC



Contact: [Dave Ellum](#)