

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 19, Number 10

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thurs., March 10, 2022

## Did President Trump's Chief of Staff commit voter fraud in Macon County?

By Brittney Lofthouse

Since Sunday, at least 16 news outlets have alleged that Mark Meadows may have committed voter fraud – the New Yorker,

The Washington Post, the Charlotte Observer, The Week, The Daily Beast, Rolling Stone, The Guardian, MSNBC, Daily Mail, Salon.com, Daily Kos, Slate Maga-

zine and others.

The reason he may have committed alleged voter fraud is because a month after Meadows

• See FRAUD page 22

## Students experience the wonder of BioBlitz

By Jenni Edwards

Recently, students at The Literacy & Learning Center took part in a BioBlitz event and set out exploring around the building on S. 4th Street to try to find plants and animals that looked interesting.

BioBlitz is part of the National Geographic Society that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time.

Local photographer Kevin Fitzpatrick who is a conservation photographer for National Geographic and a member of both NANPA and the International League of Conservation Photographers is the person behind the event. Fitzpatrick has been dedi-

• See BIOBLITZ page 9

## Chamber of Commerce property to get a face lift



With no cost to the town, at the February Town Board meeting, commissioners OK'd the overall plan to upgrade the look of the Chamber of Commerce building at the corners of 1st and Main streets and the Dillard Road. "We want to make this corner of town more appealing," said Matt Mason with Tate Landscaping. The Chamber has allocated \$50,000 for the job which will include numerous repairs to the building and property. A rock wall will be the backdrop for a metal sign at the corner but instead of being set permanently into the wall, it will be attached so it can be removed if necessary without damaging the wall.

## Area teacher questions state gov't budget claims for public education

By Brittney Lofthouse

Macon County teacher and member of the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) John DeVille spoke to the Board of

Education last week to question claims made by Senator Kevin Corbin and other members of the legislature regarding public school funding, specifically teacher pay

and bonuses.

DeVille informed the board of a February 26 letter he drafted to Senator Corbin asking for clari-

• See BUDGET page 10

## BOC hears funding requests to expand Pre-K in Highlands

By Brittney Lofthouse

Research has shown that children's lifelong well-being is positively associated with early childhood services, including formal schooling such as preschool and kindergarten.

Yet, access to early childhood services are at a capacity across Macon County.

Consequently, the Advancing Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) is requesting more than \$8 million for renovations at Highlands School. The renovations would include space for two pre-school classrooms,

• See Pre-K page 7

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Infrastructure needs will be discussed at retreat

Today is the town retreat at the Presbyterian Church's Coleman Hall. It begins at 9 am, and the public is invited to hear the budget reports and project proposals presented by town staff.

I want to touch several big-ticket items that will be presented. This review illustrates how a few hundred thousand here and there adds up to major budget needs. These are not frivolous expenditures, but essential needs that impact the basic operation of the town.

For instance, over a decade ago the town purchased new state-of-the-art digital utility meters. We went to a digital system rather than relying on a person to manually read each meter every month. These meters are now approaching the end of their functional service and have to be replaced in the coming years. Rather than replacing all the meters at once, we will do a 3-year phased replacement program. One third of the meters will be replaced this year for a cost of \$380,000 dollars.

There is a need to replace a problem-



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

atic old clay pipe sewer line on Carolina Way. That project is estimated to cost \$222,000.

The town needs to install backup generators to multiple sewer pump stations throughout the town. Having these backup generators is long overdue. The cost to install all the generators for the pumps is \$434,000. That's not a frivolous government expense, but rather a wise investment.

At the sewer plant there is a critical need to replace an aging belt press. The press is used in the final processing of solid waste. The current press was purchased as a used piece of equipment from another municipality several decades ago. A new replacement press will cost \$900,000. There are no longer any used belt press deals out there.

Between road paving and sidewalk projects the town could spend about \$500,000 this year.

There is a need to install water, electric and sewer services on Gibson Road. For decades Gibson has not been developed, but now a number of houses are in process. These new residences will require utility service which is not currently available. This cost is estimated to be around \$608,000. That does not include paving Gibson which would come next year after the utilities have been installed.





At the retreat, the board will also hear a report on the cost of replacing the Houston House with a state-of-the-art building designed for children. The new building would house the afterschool program that the Highlands Recreation Department operates.

We have several really big-ticket items, namely the replacement of the aging 1965 water clarifier tank at the water plant, and the waterlines and water tank on Dog Mountain. These projects will cost several million dollars. The town's strategy is to apply for federal and state infrastructure grants to fund these major projects. We are already in the process of developing the grant proposals and will be ready to submit them during the application period this spring.

## • HIC'S VIEW •



## • WEATHER •

Thu, 10-Mar	Fri, 11-Mar	Sat, 12-Mar	Sun, 13-Mar
 52°F 36°F	 56°F 31°F	 34°F 11°F ***	 47°F 23°F
Mostly cloudy	Mostly cloudy	Wet snow in the morning	Plenty of sunshine
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Locally owned and operated by

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Adobe PDF version at

[www.HighlandsInfo.com](http://www.HighlandsInfo.com)

265 Oak St. PO Box 2703

Highlands, N.C. 28741

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## • LETTERS •

### Let's take a vote

Dear Editor

Let's take a vote.

A vote about the value of Marc Hehn to the Highlands community.

A letter-to-the editor in the March 3 edition seemed to imply that he is the best thing to ever happen to Highlands and that anyone who thinks or says otherwise is an unformed ungrateful wretch.

Another letter in the same edition had a vastly different viewpoint. Which was asking how quickly can we rid ourselves of Mr. Hehn?

His value seems to mainly concern the dreadful, unending, ongoing saga of documents versus Marc Hehn.

These letters appeared just after the issue of 24 February – specifically, the page one article related to Mr. Hehn insisting that the Town Manager personally pay him for some attorney fees owed by Mr. Hehn.

Some of my thoughts after reading this extensive article were:

- DOESN'T PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS
- NO POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO TEAM EFFORT

- WOUNDS ARE SELF INFLICTED
- VERY LOW PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS WANT HIM

Then a batch of 'd' words came to mind – including; disbelief, disgust and mainly, disdain.

Now, about the vote mentioned above, it seems the vote has already been taken.

Please reference the 4 November, 2021 issue of this great informative free newspaper for specific details about the vote. Of the 998 eligible Highlands' voters only 145 were excited enough about Mr. Hehn to get up and cast a vote in his favor! That works out to less than 15 percent. So, now we have an idea about his perceived value to the community.

Larry Brannan  
Highlands

### Rotary coat drive was a big success

The Highlands Emergency would like to thank the Mountain Top Rotary for partnering with us on the coat drive. With the Rotaries help, we were able to give out 539 coats. This included both adult and children's sizes. We also distributed hats, gloves, scarves and socks to people in need.

We also want to thank the local churches that have donated time and energy knitting and crocheting winter hats and scarves to help keep the community warm.

Finally, a thank you goes out to this amazing community that opens its closets, brings in items, and volunteers its time in many different ways. To those that stop in and unload trucks, sort clothing and pack boxes, thank you. The Highlands Emergency Council would not function without the assistance of the entire Highlands Community.





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## ...Pre-K continued from page 1

which according to the AHEC committee, would be filled immediately.

Initially, AHEC was formed to fill a void in technology at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jeff Weller with AHEC told commissioners Monday night. However, since then, they have worked to address other needs within the school system, most recently focusing on the need for additional early education opportunities in Highlands.

Members of the AHEC committee attended the Macon County Board of County Commissioners Tuesday night explaining that after spending \$35,000 on architectural services for a concept to renovate Highlands School, the \$8.6 million would be needed to add two preschool classrooms, expanding opportunities for Project Based Learning (PBL) and provide CTE (Career Technical Curriculum) for students.

According to the planning study, space needs at Highlands School are two pre-K classrooms at 1,200 square feet each, 36 students and a playground that is 2,700 square feet.

• See Pre-K page 10

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## • OBITUARIES •

### Melanie Wilson Nix

Melanie Wilson Nix, 53, of the Satolah community, went to her heavenly home March 4, 2022.

Melanie was a member of Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church and she was strong in her faith with God. The next most important thing was her family. She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother and spent as much time with them as possible. She loved the outdoors and the natural beauty in the mountains. She enjoyed working in her flowers, reading books and listening to music. She loved her friends and they were all special to her. She worked in the real-estate industry as a realtor for many years.

She is preceded in death by her father Joe Wilson.



Melanie is survived by her loving husband, Lamar Nix; three sons, Justin Watson (Sarah) of Highlands, NC, Jacob Watson (Kyleigh), Luke Nix both of the Satolah Community; mother, Norma Billingsley Wilson of the Satolah community, one sister Sherri Wilson Lovelady (Chris) of the Satolah Community; one grandson Jackson Watson.

The family had a graveside service Sunday March 6, 2022 at at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. Zane Talley officiating.

The family asks that donations be made to Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery Fund 256 Bee Gum Hollar Rd. Clayton, GA 30525 in memory of Melanie.

### David H Postles, Jr., M.D.

David H Postles, Jr., M.D. of Highlands, NC and Bradenton, FL died March 6, 2022.

Dr. Postles was born in Sylacauga, AL on September 17, 1942, the son of David H. Postles and Jane J. Postles, and then spent his formative years in Rochester, NY. He received his B.S. degree from Hamilton College and his M.D. degree cum laude from SUNY Upstate Medical Center. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Omicron Alpha honor medical society. Dr. Postles served his internship and residency at Case Western Reserve University Hospitals of Cleveland. His residency was interrupted by two years of service as a Major in the US Army Medical Corps at Ft. Bragg, NC.

In 1974, Dr. Postles joined Drs. Bunch, Salley, and Rowland in Columbia, SC in what grew to be South Carolina OB/GYN Associates, the largest private OB/GYN practice in Columbia. He served as president of the group for many years, and was proud of his relationships with many long-term patients. When a change in health forced his retirement in 2013, he and Barbara moved permanently to their home in Highlands, NC to be closer to their children and grandchildren in the Atlanta area.

Dr. Postles married Barbara Andrus after his first year of medical school in 1965, having dated her since high school. She temporarily interrupted her college education to financially support the young



couple. They loved the South Carolina coast and spent the majority of weekends there for thirty years. Dr. Postles was an avid deep-sea fisherman for many years. On most Saturdays in season, he could be found at the gulf stream awaiting the scream of fishing line peeling off a large trolling reel. Dave and Barb later transitioned to serious recreational boating; their cruising

destinations ranged from the Chesapeake Bay to Key West, as well as the Abacos, Exumas, and Berry Islands in the Bahamas. Later in life, they enjoyed several RV trips to the western states, with Colter Bay at Grand Teton National Park being their favorite destination.

Dr. Postles was predeceased by his parents and brother-in-law, Fred Culbert. He is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, daughter Jill Hunter (Rodney) of Woodstock, GA and son Jeffrey Postles (Dawn) of Cumming, GA. He is also survived by his adored grandchildren Bryce Hunter, Emily Hunter, and Claire Postles, as well as step-grandsons Josh and Jordan Simmons, his sister, Linda Sue Culbert of Rochester, and brother, Donald Postles of Buffalo.

A private service for immediate family will be scheduled at a later time.

Memorials may be made to Highlands Cashiers Land Trust or the charity of one's choice.



...BIOBLITZ continued from page 1



Students at the Literacy Council scrounge for specimens as part of the BioBlitz program.

cated to the promotion of environmental education through documenting biodiversity for more than 40 years.

"The Smokies are probably the one park in the United States that has more species than any other park. So far, we found about 1,000 new species to science and about 10,000 species that they didn't know were in the park. They think there's probably at least 50 to one 100,000 species we haven't even touched yet. I've

lived in a lot of other places, and I always come back to North Carolina. It's because of the mountains and the biodiversity that's here."

After students returned with their catches, Fitzpatrick gave a talk on biodiversity and conservation and photographed the children's great finds.

"We are so grateful to Kevin for bringing this wonderful program to our students they really enjoyed the activity," said Anna Norton, senior programs manager.

"We're hoping to do more BioBlitz activities as the seasons change, and the kids are excited to see the different plants and insects that emerge as the weather warms up."



Specimens were then photographed by Kevin Fitzpatrick as part of the BioBlitz program.

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## ...Pre-K continued from page 7

For project-based learning and career technical education, the planning study found that there needs to be labs/maker's spaces added to the elementary, middle and high schools at 1,200 to 2,000 square feet each, more square feet in the media center and independent learning areas.

Weller explained that the new pre-K classrooms are being proposed to be integrated into the elementary wing with long-term enrollment flexibility and proximity to existing plumbing. There will be an adjacent playground area that is fenced in and landscaped/screened from car traffic, which is required by the state for preschool

classrooms.

Macon County Schools currently has space for just under 100 preschool spots, all of which are located in the Franklin area. The school district's preschool classrooms are located at South Macon (two classrooms) Iotla Valley (two classrooms) and one at Cartoogechaye.

"Currently in Macon County Schools we have 5five preschool classrooms and each classroom has 18 student slots. That allows us to serve 90 students. Today we have 88 students enrolled," said Brooke Keener, Director of Exceptional Children/AIG/

• See Pre-K page 16



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## ...BUDGET continued from page 1

fication regarding a \$2,750 supplement for Macon County employees that was set aside in the '21-'22 budget. To date, Macon County employees have not yet received that supplement bonus — and while Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said employees will receive it this month, it won't be the \$2,750 that was announced in November.

"The bonus that was discussed was provided by the GA through the Special Allotment for Teacher Compensation," said Dr. Baldwin. "With the school board electing to provide additional funding in order to include local and federally paid teachers, each school teacher in Macon County will receive an additional supplement of \$1,012 before withholdings. This supplement will be included in the March payroll."

While it is still unclear whether the state or local district is responsible for the delay in distributing the supplement to employees, Senator Corbin did offer clarification on the discrepancy in the allotted amount that will be provided to teachers.

"We were told the formula added supplements to each rural county and we were told the amounts for each by the non-partisan budget office," explained Senator Corbin. All seven of my county's estimates were pretty much dead on but Macon. They gave us the wrong number and that's the number I gave Dr. Chris Baldwin because that is what I was told. I am so sorry, and I regret that we were given the wrong amount for Macon County."

DeVile also took issue in Senator Corbin's assertion that the supplement being provided to employees in Macon County and across the state, was a permanent increase.

DeVile noted that the money for the teacher supplements came out of a special fund created by the current general assembly using a special \$100 million fund. DeVile noted that once that fund runs out, the supplements will disappear and the future of the supplements cannot be guaranteed as a current General Assembly cannot set decisions for future legislators.

However, Senator Corbin noted that with anything budgeted by a current General Assembly — future state leaders can change it once they are elected — that is the nature of changing legislators during an election cycle, however, it was the intent of the \$100 million fund that it would be maintained well into the future.

The new funding is recurring, meaning that it will remain in the budget for the foreseeable future to help counties with planning

According to Senate leader Phil Berger's press office, 65 % of the allocation formula is based on the county's tax base, 25 % on the median household income, and 10 % on the effective tax rate.

The special fund was established to address funding discrepancies across the state in terms of locally provided supplements. The provision is meant to bring smaller counties into greater parity with more populous ones in terms of supplemental pay. For example, counties such as Wake (\$8,873), Mecklenburg (\$8,773), and Guilford (\$4,927) include generous supplements already from local funds. But counties such as Alleghany (\$500), Ashe (\$600), and Clay (\$24) do not. Under the new budget, supplemental pay in those counties will increase to \$3,346 for Alleghany, \$1,672 for Ashe, and \$2,871 for Clay when factoring in the new state funds.

Senator Corbin also noted that in addition to the supplemental bonus, the first of its kind for North Carolina teachers, the state's budget included other additional funding bonuses.

"Mr. deVile failed to recognize that in addition to the \$1,000 supplemental bonus, most teachers also received a \$2,800 bonus in January plus pay raises paid retroactively back to July 2021," said Senator Corbin. "Of course, a future legislature could decrease or even increase the supplement. Fact is, this is the first time rural NC counties have been given a teacher supplement from the State. I advocated for that and will continue to do so despite the lack of support from Mr. DeVile and the NCAE. It is important to note that the NCAE is a political action committee that almost exclusively endorses Democrat candidates. Despite no education experience or record of education support, the NCAE endorsed my Democrat opponent in the last election. That is OK with me and quite predictable. Mr. deVile is acting to justify their lack of support for me. I have spent my entire adult life advocating and working for public education in NC and particularly Macon County. I don't appreciate his negative bias. However, I will keep on working for public schools and teachers in NC despite Mr. deVile and his continued negative commentary."

Members of the Macon County Board of Education noted that while they would always like to see increased funding for public education needs and salaries, they are extremely grateful for the support Sen. Corbin has showed and the supplement and bonuses employees did receive in this budget.



# • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

## Too Big for our Britches

Are we getting too big for our britches? Let's consider not only our own feelings, but those of our neighbors, too. And by neighbors, I mean everyone in our mountain communities, after all, we really are all in this together.

I love to look at architectural drawings because they symbolize someone's plan for the future. It's eye candy, a dream or a vision. Let's remember that word. Vision. Being a Realtor for 30 of the 32 years I've lived here, I've seen plenty of architectural drawings and have heard of lots of plans for the future. There's something very satisfying when you see the sparkle in a buyer's eyes as they envision how they will make the home they're buying their own. It's their virtual architectural drawing.

There were plenty of locals already living here before our town was founded in 1875, but at least since then, the promotion of Highlands, NC seems to have been its purpose. If you've spent any time at all here, you've heard the story of two developers from Kansas, Samuel Kelsey and C.C. Hutchinson, who took a map and drew a line from New York to New Orleans, and then another line from Chicago to Savannah. They predicted those lines would become a great trade route for the future and where the lines crossed would become a great population center. I've heard that story a gazillion times and laughed at those developers' misguided dreams. They really got it wrong, right? Great trade center would be Atlanta, or Charlotte, but not here. Highlands isn't on the route to anywhere because of the access roads. You come to Highlands because you want to come to Highlands. Lately, I've been rethinking Kelsey and Hutchinson's plan, retracting my laughs, and realizing their vision came true.

This town has had slow-but-steady growth since 1875. Residential homes, hotels, and Main Street eventually filled up its slots and spilled over into the outskirts of town. Now, every space is filled in and overflowing and oozing out like lava, slow but sure. The 50s through the 80s saw a new golf community in every decade. Each of those were seasonal, but through the years, more and more are year-round communities. Summer cottages, built only for two-three months of living have been renovated



**Jeannie Chambers**  
Chambers Realty  
& Vacation Rentals

to be usable any time of year, and then renovated over and over again to 'larger and better.'

We've managed to keep most chain stores and restaurants out. We used to hear one reason those aren't here is because we don't have the year-round population to make it worth the investment. Changes over the last twenty years have been in overdrive. The 70s had a similar growth spurt, especially with condominiums. I daresay millions have visited here since the town opened its doors to tourism in 1875. Some stayed for a weekend, some longer, and some never left.

It's the people who make up a town. There is a mixture of locals, part-time residents, full-time residents, and the people who are just traveling through, the visitors. Tourists. This is a resort town, a holiday town. People visit here on holiday, school breaks, summer breaks and since the road to Atlanta keeps improving, a weekend destination. If you or your family has moved here since 1875, you knew it was a resort town when you made it your home.

The more year-round residents we have, the more 'things' are needed to make living here more enjoyable like the big-city-sized Performing Arts Center and the newly planned commercial/residential center at N. 4th Street/ Carolina Way/ Pine Street. Some are needed for the health and safety of anyone who is here, like the hospital or the new super-sized fire station. Residential areas are built that tower over our once landmark homes.

Is this a growth spurt? Are we getting too big for our britches? I love what I do, and I still love seeing the sparkle in the eyes of home buyers as they describe how they are going to make their home unique to them. Some of my favorite buyers are the ones who understand what they've found when they see a home with 'old Highlands charm.' Those homes are becoming harder to find and I fear the charm is being squeezed out. You know what they say about once the toothpaste has been squeezed out of the tube? We have to find a way to utilize what's been squeezed out and protect what is left in the tube while keeping the vision of our founders in place. There is no such thing as closing the doors to Highlands. We welcome all with open arms because we all in this together. It's all a part of the vision.

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# Details of Western NC national forest plan drawing objection

*Southern Environmental Law Center plans to file objection over acreage perceived as being left at risk under U.S. Forest Service plan for Western NC national forests.*

**By Jack Igelman**  
Carolina Public Press

While the U.S. Forest Service's long-awaited land management plan for Nantahala and Pisgah national forests in Western North Carolina, released in January, has generated plenty of discussion, one aspect that most stakeholders agree on is the need to ensure that the forest's ecosystems are healthy and resilient.

Among the plan's objectives is to accelerate the development of young and open forestland that is underrepresented and to increase the designated old-growth tree network.

"Yet some forest advocates think the forest plan missed the mark, leaving some acres of the forest at risk," including sections of known old-growth stands "and places delineated as rare and exemplary habitat by the state of North Carolina's Natural Heritage Program.

"The Forest Service intends to accomplish great things with the plan," said Sam Evans, an attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center.

"They are talking about protecting old growth and restoring species composition and the characteristics of structural elements that are important to wildlife species. I don't have complaints about the amount of (timber restoration) work the Forest Service plans to do. It's the why, the where and the how."

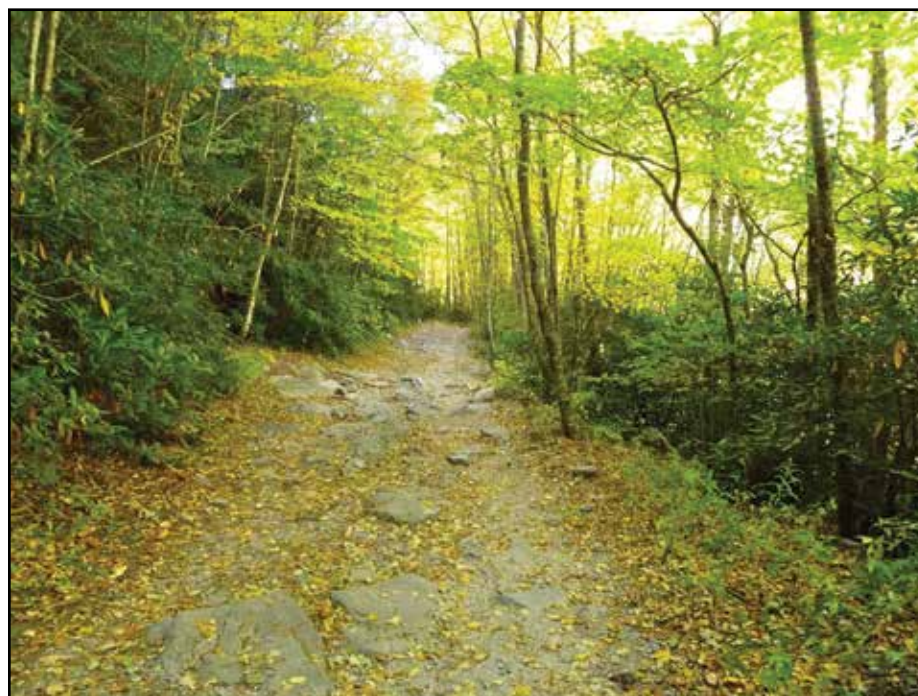
Underway is a 60-day objection period that began Jan. 21. According to Evans, the SELC plans to file an objection to the plan.

Ken Arney, the Atlanta-based regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Region, has 90 days to review and resolve each objection. The forester will issue a written response that could include additional direction for James Melonas, National Forests of North Carolina forest supervisor, to include in the final plan.

The Forest Service intends to approve the plan this summer.

"Interested parties" can request to participate in a resolution meeting. However, both "objectors" and interested parties must have been engaged in the planning process before its release.

Michelle Aldridge, a Forest Service planner, told Carolina Public Press that the forest plan forms the strategic vision



A scene in the Pisgah National Forest. (Jack Igelman/Carolina Public Press)

for the landscape-scale approach to ecosystem-based restoration. The formation of projects in the future, such as trail building, road maintenance or timber harvesting, will be driven by the desired conditions and objectives identified in the plan.

A 12-page reader's guide explains the land management plan and the final environmental impact statement. However, the plan itself and the FEIS include hundreds of pages, dozens of charts, maps and highly technical information.

Among the challenges of interpreting the management plan is grasping how land is allocated in the plan and how various portions of the landscape will be managed.

An organizational feature of the plan is the allocation of forest land into management area categories.

Management areas, such as designated and recommended wilderness, are the most restrictive timber management categories. However, other categories, such as "ecological interest areas" and "the backcountry" allow timber activities but require consideration of site-specific context that may restrict some forms of harvesting, such as clear-cutting, but may allow selective harvesting or managed fire.

Evans said the "matrix" and "interface" categories – a total of 610,434 acres

"are the 'footprint' where 'scheduled timber harvest will occur.'"

In all, Pisgah and Nantahala national forests encompass 1,043,636 acres.

Matrix is the largest general forest management area with an emphasis on active management. Interface contains the most concentrated recreation use in the forest, which includes heavily used roads.

Aldridge said the total amount of acres available for timber production in the plan, known as the "suitable base," is 459,175 acres, though the agency does not plan to harvest 459,175 acres.

"Just because acres are calculated as suitable or are included in the matrix or interface management areas, doesn't mean they're going to be cut," she said.

"The land within the matrix area is managed to address all of its features, such as waterways, trails and scenic vistas or other places where timber harvest is not desirable."

Aldridge said the acreage numbers presented in the forest plan are complicated and don't necessarily reflect future activities.

"Focusing on analysis numbers instead of Forest Service planned actions introduces confusion and misunderstanding," she said.

The annual objectives, according to

Aldridge, provide a more realistic picture of the anticipated actions over the life of the plan.

The Forest Service's "tier 1" timber cutting goal is 1,200 acres annually. With additional resources from partners, the "tier 2" goal is 3,200 acres annually, or up to 32,000 acres over the course of a decade.

Footprint or suitable base?

The difference between the "footprint" and the "suitable base" is nearly 150,000 acres.

The 150,000-acre subset of land in the footprint is excluded from timber harvesting activities since the land may include, for example, steep slopes, streams, established old-growth or other resources where timber management is not appropriate.

For example, the Ivy Knob section of Pisgah National Forest in Buncombe County is within the matrix and interface management areas.

"The problem is the footprint (in general, not necessarily Big Ivy) includes areas that we know are high conflict," Evans said.

"There are just no rules requiring that the rare, underrepresented or exemplary values found at the site-specific level be prioritized. So, we shouldn't emphasize that kind of management in places where we know there are localized values like old-growth and rare habitats.

"The point is to be able to implement the scheduled harvest program without running into complications and conflicts. (Stakeholders have) been clear all along that the footprint should not include places we know require the site-specific context in order to get it right."

For instance, establishing a new road to access a timber project may impact a rare species or stand of old growth.

Evans told CPP that the landscape level priorities of timber volume, wildlife habitat and young forest creation predominate over localized values like old-growth or rare habitats.

In his view, the management area assignment matters "more than any other choice for planning," with "no limits requiring harvest to be ecologically appropriate" for the rare, underrepresented or



## ...FOREST continued from page 12

exemplary values found at the site-specific level.

“Stakeholders are asking the Forest Service to resolve some of the issues at the plan level so we can hit the ground running,” Evans said.

“What we are seeing is the Forest Service deferring those issues to the future without any mechanism to ensure things are balanced at the plan level. Without that, we’re going to run into the same project-level conflicts that we’ve always had.

“The Forest Service can say we can be careful at the project level and avoid these areas, but if that was their intention, they should have that at the front end and put them in a different management area.”

The fine details of activities are developed during the planning stages of future projects.

District rangers have the authority to approve or change projects.

Josh Kelly, MountainTrue’s public lands biologist, said aspects of the plan are vague and open to interpretation.

“The planning process offered the Forest Service the chance to make some big decisions at the plan level to make projects more efficient,” Kelly said.

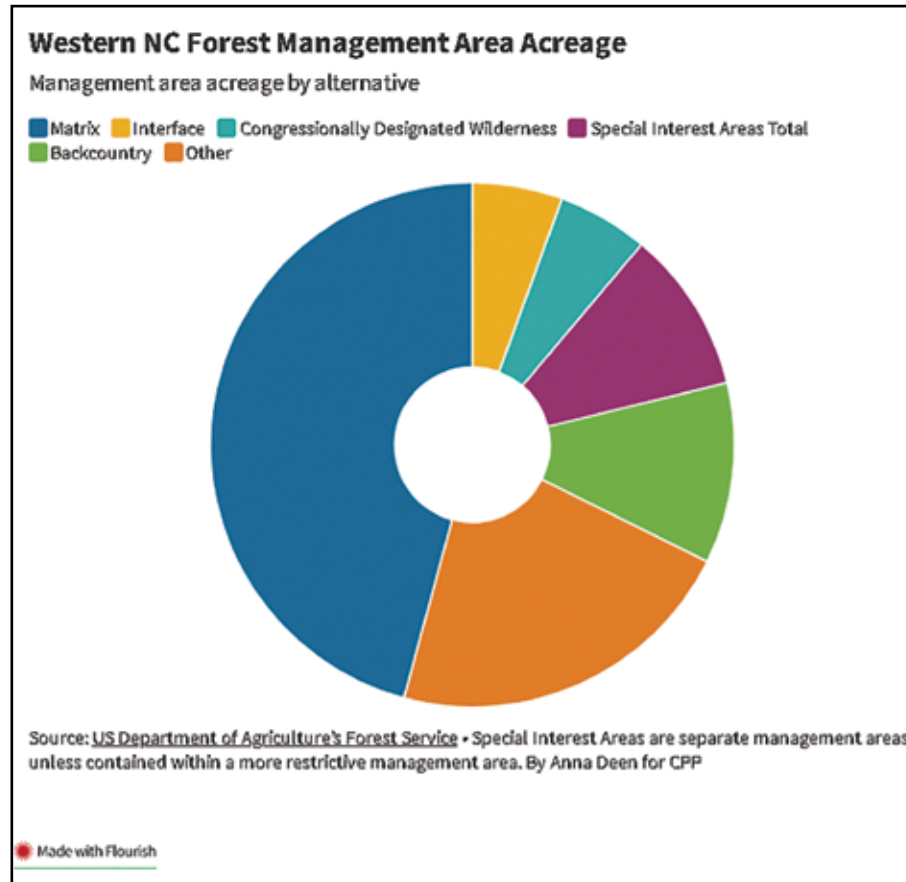
“That would help everyone whether you’re interested in timber harvesting, young forest, water quality or recreation access. They have punted everything to the project level. A small part of the forest is going to cause the most problems. The FS valued the flexibility and discretion of their own employees over public input.”

The Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership, a collaborative organization representing a range of forest interests, submitted maps during the planning process that included a smaller footprint and suitable base than the allocation proposed by the Forest Service.

The partnership recommended a 360,000-acre suitable base with a 460,000-acre management footprint. The group’s recommendation included 1,500 acres per year of scheduled timber harvest and another 1,500 acres of unscheduled targeted timber restoration.

There is potential, Kelly said, that project planning won’t go well and maintain the status quo in which conflict is common.

“My time and the time of folks on the other side of an issue will be wasted arguing about the 10% or 20% of land in



projects that include places that would be harmed by logging,” he said.

**Flexible management**

“Timber harvests are not random acts,” Aldridge said. “They are part of carefully designed silvicultural prescriptions for restoring healthy forests.”

At the onset of developing a project, an interdisciplinary team of specialists will work with partners and the public to develop projects using in-depth, up-to-date, local information.

“We need more young and open forest, which requires cutting some trees,” she said.

“We also need more very old forest, and so we’ve set some areas aside where we won’t be cutting trees. Restoring healthy forests will help us build resiliency in the face of insects, disease and climate change. The forests are a dynamic system, and we need flexibility for an adaptive approach.”

Lang Hornthal of Ecoforesters agrees with the need for flexibility in forestry.

“The approach of locking up anything that has value to a certain group is not practical,” he said.

“Forestry is a lesson in adaptive management. You make the best decisions based on the outcomes you want to see and watch over time. You have to monitor

it and adjust and adapt.”

He is most concerned about a fragile trust between the agency and public land advocates.

“(Projects) are already contentious because of the lack of trust on past projects,” he said. “Viewed through that lens, if we keep doing projects like we have in the past, we’re going to have problems. But that’s the point of the plan, that we won’t keep doing projects like we have in the past.”

Hornthal said the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership is committed to working with the Forest Service on the project level.

Kelly, however, said that he doesn’t think the plan prioritizes the collaborative outcome well enough. There’s plenty of language about collaboration, he said, but not enough in the plan to make it a reality.

For instance, Kelly identified the need for more monitoring “triggers” to ensure that once the plan achieves a Tier 1 plan goal, such as road maintenance, this doesn’t result in damage to another plan goal, such as water quality.

Hornthal said it’s a reasonable argument that giving rangers discretion is a concern: “They have to come through at the project level.”

If not, he said, “some people will lose hope in collaboration.”

**Timber industry**

Orrin Goure, a forester with Columbia Forest Products headquartered in Greensboro, said his company’s primary input is yellow poplar.

Columbia is North America’s largest producer of hardwood veneer and plywood in the U.S.

“The Forest Service has a multiple-use mandate, and timber production is part of that,” he said. “It’s not to say our industry is more important than anyone else, but many local economies rely on the income flow.”

Goure and others in the forest products industry are concerned by what they view as a “chipping away” of the suitable base that the industry relies on.

“It’s important the suitable base remains as large as it can be,” he said, to allow the Forest Service to develop economically feasible commercial timber projects. For example, the cost of extracting timber, including labor, road construction and transportation may exceed the lumber’s value.

Evidence of this imbalance is the recent Twelve Mile Project in Pisgah National Forest in Haywood County, which received no bids from the industry.

“There’s a difference between the suitable base and what is actually operable “it’s either too rough, steep, rocky or costly to be logged,” he said.

Nevertheless, Goure said the conservation community and the timber industry are aligned.

“Both of us want more timber restoration, and the commercial industry is the most cost-effective tool of restoration,” he said. According to Goure, managed fire is costly and has a small window of opportunity only in the spring and fall.

He understands, however, the concerns of the environmental community.

“Addressing the place-based concerns is really important,” Goure said. “There’s room to (manage for other values) and active forest management. They can happen together.

“I think the Forest Service could trade acres here and there to adjust the mapping and alleviate some of the concerns involving existing old-growth or exceptional state natural heritage areas without diminishing the suitable base.”

David Whitmire of Rosman has been a leading voice during the planning process that has advocated for more active

# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

**This Saturday, March 12**, 20% of sales from the five Kilwins stores owned by Landon & Ashley Clark will be donated to Hope House International's Family Emergency Fund.

Those five Kilwins stores are located in Brevard, Highlands, Hendersonville, Greenville, SC, and Franklin, TN.

Hope House International is deeply involved in Ukraine and serves orphans by assisting Christian families in Eastern Europe with adequate housing required to adopt orphans and raise them in their own country.

Landon, Ashley, and Melissa cordially invite the Highlands community to be a part of their fundraiser day on Saturday, March 12th. The Highlands store is open 10am to 9pm

## Rec Pool Schedule:

- Lap Swim Monday-Friday 6am-10am, Monday and Thursday 11:15am-7pm and Tuesday and Wednesday 11:15am-3:30pm 6 lanes AND 3:30-7 (shared Pool) and Saturday 10-11am 6 lanes. Adult Swim Monday-Thursday 11:15am-7pm.

Call ahead for Public Swim Weekend schedule due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

- Tickets for Bear Shadow Music Festival are on sale now. For more information, visit <https://bearshadownc.com/information/>.

## Mondays

- ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? Visit [www.maconncliteracy.org](http://www.maconncliteracy.org), call 828-526 – 0863 or email [info@maconncliteracy.org](mailto:info@maconncliteracy.org)

## Second Mondays

- The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women who want to return to school or further their education and have a financial need, meets at 10 a.m. If interested, please call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004 for meeting places.

## Mon-Fri

- Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10:15-11am.

## Mon., Tues., Thurs.

- The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a to 6p,

## Mon. & Wed.

- Cardio Kickboxing with Crystal Corbin 5:30-6:30 p.m. A full body workout that engages

every muscle in the body.

- New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more information, call Anna 267-825-0716.

## Mon, & Thurs,

- Drive-thru flu clinics at the Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Dr. in Franklin from 1-4 pm \$36 for the regular dose and the \$73 for the high dose (recommended for those 65+). Insurance will be filed; please bring your insurance card with you. Questions? Call 828.349.2081.

## Mon, Wed, Thurs

- Indoor and outdoor Pickle Ball 10:30 am-1 pm.

## Mon, Wed, Fri

- Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30-9:30am. \$25 a month, The class is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

- Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9 am.

## Tues. & Thurs.

- Pilates-Strength and Stretch with Autumn Lucas

- New Zumba class with Gay Chalpin from 4:30-5:30p.

- Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with many different types of exercise.

## 1st Tuesdays

- Indivisible Highlands from 5-6:30 pm at the Hudson Library.

## Tuesdays

- Strength Training 8:15-9:15am. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone.

## First Wednesdays

- Highlands-Cashiers Hospi-

tal is featuring "Walk-in Wednesdays" Hiring Event. Interviewing for RNs, CNAs, Allied Health Professionals and Support Services Professionals, 1-3:30 pm. 190 Hospital Drive, front entrance. On the spot offers, Sign-on bonuses offered for select positions, Bring updated resume. Casual wear.

## Thursdays

- Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout.

- Free Covid vaccination clinics – 9 am to 5pm at the Rec Park. (Closed for a half-hour lunch break) Location subject to change. please check <https://myspot.nc.gov/> for the latest location information. Walk-ins are accepted, however we encourage residents to pre-register and schedule an appointment at <https://myoptumserve.com/covid19> or by calling (877) 505-6723 if you do not have internet.

## 2nd Saturdays

- The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club meets in Highlands at The Bascom at 10 a.m. March and November.

## 3rd Saturdays

- The American Legion Post 370 meets on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/ 909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10AM We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed McCloskey, Commander for any information @828-787-1660

## Thurs. March 10

- Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4, a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

- At Whiteside Brewing Company in Cashiers, Grub for Good from 4-7 p.m. when 10% of sales will go to Summit Charter School.

## Tues. March 15

- Highlands School Kindergarten Registration is on. Children who reach the age of 5 on or before August 31, 2022 are eligible for admission into the Class of 2035 Call 828-526-2147

for more information.

## Thurs. April 14

- Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4, a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

## April 29-May 1

- Bear Shadow Music Festival. For tickets go to [bearshadownc.com](http://bearshadownc.com).

## Thurs., May 12

- Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4, a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

## Mon. March 14

- High Mountain Squares will start Modern Western Style Square Dance classes from 6:30-8:30 PM on Monday evening. Classes will be at the Environmental Resource Center, 1624 Lakeside Dr, Franklin, NC. For more info call: (727) 599-1440. (828) 332-0001, or (828) 200-0674.

## Sat., March 19

- The March 2022 meeting of the Western North Carolina Woodturners Club Inc. will be on Saturday at 10 AM at the Bascom in Highlands The Bascom is located at 323 Franklin Rd, Highlands, NC, just north of Downtown Highlands, NC (heading toward Franklin). Drive across the covered bridge into the parking lot and

come into the main entrance near the covered patio. There will be directions on how to get to the wood turning studio. Visitors are always welcome.

## Tues.-Thurs., March 22-24

Portrait artist Morgan Johnston art exhibit at The Highlander Mountain House 10a til close.

## Thurs., March 24

Performer Duquette Johnston at the Ruffed Grouse at the Highlander Mountain House at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$25. Call 828-526-2590

## Fri., March 25

Portrait Sitzings with Morgan Johnston 10a to noon by appointment. Email [morgan@ruggedandfancy.com](mailto:morgan@ruggedandfancy.com)

## Sat -Sun, June 25 & 26

- Highlands Mountaintop Rotary Art & Craft Show will be held in Kelsey-Hutchinson Park on Pine Street in downtown Highlands from 10a to 5p. Now in its 17th year, this popular event showcases talent from the area and features fine art, folk art, crafts and furniture. Attendance is free, dogs are allowed, and food will be available. For info contact coordinator Cynthia Strain at (828) 318-9430 or visit: [www.mountaintopshow.com](http://www.mountaintopshow.com)



Highlander Mountain House is thrilled to welcome Morgan and Duquette Johnston from Birmingham, AL to our Salon Series this month. feature art and song. Morgan will be showing her art and taking appointments for portrait sittings and Duquette Johnston will be in the Ruffed Grouse Tavern featuring songs from his recent release, The Social Animals. Tickets are \$25 for concert. Call 828-526-2590 for more information.



## CLE is gearing up for the 2022 season! Come learn with us!

CLE aims to facilitate the fun and adventure of learning! CLE offers classes, workshops and educational trips meeting the needs of active adults in the community, welcoming both residents and visitors. Covering the arts, computers and technology, culinary topics, gardening, nature, history, literature, music, science, and current affairs, 2022 is packed with courses and events May through October.

Some of this season's events include storytelling with Connie Regan-Blake set for June 23rd. Connie presents a remarkable laugh-out-loud storytelling journey from her mountain leap in New Zealand to her husband's "Dorky Spandex vs Macho Leather" encounter on the Blue Ridge Parkway to the sparkling traditional Scottish tale, "Well at the End of the World." Intertwined with her performance stories, Connie will generously share ideas and tools she has developed and learned throughout her trailblazing storytelling career. Through partner exercises and a 'walk through memories,' you will enjoy exploring events of your own life. Utilizing 'deep Listening,' she will guide you in experiencing how the 5 senses and the 'colors' of the moment

bring a story to life and connect you to your listeners. Whether your interests lie in telling stories to family on the front porch, or more effectively connecting with staff and public- or performing for a group, you'll have a taste of 'art & heart of storytelling.

July 11th features Andrew Weismann with The Mueller Investigation: Lesson from an Insider. Drawing on his experience as a member of Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller's investigation team, Andrew Weissman will speak about two ongoing issues confronting America raised in the Special Counsel report: the threat of continuing cyber-attacks on our political and economic system by foreign actors both state and non-state and the related question whether criminal investigation and prosecution can be effective tools to hold wrong doers accountable. In addition, he will propose various steps that can be taken to make our democratic institutions more resilient.

If art and history together spark your interest, join us July 20th at the Bascom for a wine reception and presentation by Tim Riley, Director and Curator for the national Churchill Museum. History paints a portrait of Churchill (1847-1965) as an ambitious, confident, bold,

and highly creative man. Volumes have been written about him as a statesman as a leader whose eccentricities and audacity contributed to his stubborn defiance in the face of adversity. There is another picture to be painted of Sir Winston Churchill: the portrait of Churchill as an artist. This presentation will examine Churchill's passion for painting, a hobby that informed and inspired him throughout his life.

Get those tastebuds thriving August 3rd for Bourbon Basics, a tasting event. Learn to taste bourbon like an expert with Louisville based bourbon authority Susan Reigler. She will introduce you to what sets bourbon apart from the other world whiskeys and to three distinct bourbon styles – traditional, wheated and bottled-in-bond. You will also learn the history of each brand tasted.

For our adventure seekers, join us August 9th for a field trip to an Apiary and a honey tasting. On this adventure you will experience a mountain top sanctuary and millions of bees that call it home (hive). Here we will discuss the life of a hive, its Queen, and the fierce loyalty of her female subjects. You will inspect a hive up close with the beekeeper in a protective suit, hold a frame full of bees and experience the thrill of a Queen sitting. Savor honey from the apiary that is paired expertly with different foods for a light lunch (and champagne)! Learn how to evaluate the properties of honey varieties and of course pour a souvenir bottle of honey straight from the hive.

We have many more fascinating and educational events planned for the 2022 season. Please visit our website to register your email to receive our newsletters to stay informed as we announce details of the upcoming season, [www.cle-highlands.com](http://www.cle-highlands.com) or call our office at (828) 526-8811 for more information. We look forward to learning with you in 2022!



Aug. 3 is Bourbon Basics.



July 20 is The portrait of Churchill as an artist.



Aug. 9 is a Honey Tasting Adventure



Storytelling with Connie Regan-Blake is set for June 23.



## ...Pre-K continued from page 10

PreK. "We have put out applications to our community for Fall 2022 enrollment and we have currently 44 completed applications that have been turned into us. Even for returning students a new application must be filled out every year. Applications are due April 20th."

In addition to preschool op-

tions within the Macon County School system, there are private preschool and early education options in both Highlands and the Franklin area such as Macon Program for Progress in Franklin and the Gordon Center in Highlands and the Highlands Community Child Development Center. However, even with options outside of

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Richard Delany with Old Edwards Inn speaks to commissioners about the impact the lack of childcare had on businesses in Highlands.  
— Photo by Brittney Lofthouse

the school system, there remains a long wait list for families in Macon County.

According to Maci Bears, a fourth-grade teacher at Highlands School and a member of the AHEC committee, there are children on the waitlist for spots in the private preschool programs in Highlands who have not even been born yet.

While Macon County's biggest hurdle for providing additional preschool classrooms within the school system is currently the lack of space for the classrooms, Janice Edgerton, Executive Director for the Region A Partnership for Chil-

dren said there is a lack of staff to fill the classrooms that are available now, too.

Region A is the non-profit organization responsible for administering North Carolina's Smart Start and NC Pre-K initiatives in the seven western-most counties and on the Qualla Boundary. Right now, they have 48 classrooms in their coverage area and 96 teachers.

Alison Tate, who has been working with AHEC is set to retire this year after operating one the Gordon Center in Highlands for over a decade. Tuesday night she told commissioners that even though they have been trying for two years to find a replacement to take over the program, there is a lack of qualified staff which may result in having to close the program.

According to Tate, the two existing preschool classrooms in the Highlands area are currently at capacity and have a waitlist of 87 children.

Keener said Macon County experiences the same waitlist issues as the private locations in Highlands.

"There is always an abundance of interest in our program and oftentimes we have had individuals call when they became pregnant to put their child on a waiting list," said Keener. "This

was not a sustainable practice keeping waiting lists five years in advance. We ask interested parties to begin contacting us and looking for applications in March of the year they'd like their student to enroll in one of our preschool programs."

Richard Delany with Old Edwards Inn in Highlands addressed commissioners and said the lack of childcare in Highlands is an economic issue as employees moving to the area don't have options for childcare and therefore can't work. Without childcare and early education options for potential employees, Delany says that Old Edwards struggles to fill needed spots and experiences staffing shortages.

The funding request from AHEC is just one of the requests Macon County Commissioners are considering for capitol improvements across Macon County this year.

The Macon County Board of Education reviewed more than \$24 million in capital outlay requests during its February board meeting. After a lengthy board discussion, the school system approved \$10,569,960.44 in capital outlay requests which will be submitted to county commissioners as part of this year's budget planning process.



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# • HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SPORTS •

## Highlands School golf season is in full swing

By Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

Highlands boys golf team travelled to Sky Valley Country Club on Feb. 28 to kick off the season with a match against Franklin High School.

Highlands didn't take the win with a team score of 232; Win Dyleski shot a 52, Carson Forrester shot a 58, and Harrison Gates and Jeffrey Olvera both scored 61.

"The course is in pretty good shape for this time of year and with how much rain we got the weekend before the match," said Gearhart.

Highlands travelled to Sequoyah National Golf Club the following day to take on Cherokee and Swain. Highlands took second with a team score of 225.

Dyleski shot a 48, Forrester shot a 58, Gates shot a 57, and Olvera shot a 62.

"We played pretty good considering how hard of a golf course the boys played," said Gearhart. "I was proud of

them for sticking with it and not giving up and it opened their eyes to what stuff we need to work on in practice."



Highlands Jeffrey Olvera lines up a long putt at Sky Valley.

— Photo by Brian O'Shea

## Post season BB season awards announced

Coach Brett Lamb announced post season awards for the '21-'22 basketball season.

Boys All Conference: Jeffrey Olvera and Kasen Mitchell. For Girls all conference:

Hayley Borino — Little Smoky Mountain Conference Player of the Year; Julia Schmitt, Reese Schmitt and Ava Schmitt — honorable mention. Lamb was named Little Smoky Mountain Coach of The Year.

On Saturday, March 19, Highlands will be the host site for the 1A West vs Widwest All Star Game

The West Teams are made up of

selected seniors from the Little and Big Smoky Mountain Conference. These schools include: Andrews, Blue Ridge, Cherokee, Hayesville, Highlands, Hiwassee Dam, Murphy, Nantahala, Robbinsville and Swain.

The Midwest teams are made up of selected seniors from Avery County, Bessemer City, Cherryville, Draughn, Highland Tech, Rosman and Thomas Jefferson.

Highlands Representatives will be: Jeffrey Olvera, Hayley Borino, Ava Schmitt, Julia Schmitt and Reese Schmitt. Coach Brett Lamb will be the head coach for the West Girls.

## ...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 18

our leaders and government (I Timothy 2:1-3).

Many influential and powerful leaders are hostile to God and His Word. Nevertheless, we are to pray for them that they might turn to God and embrace His Gospel and will. In doing so, they will less likely oppose God, His Word, and God's people, and this can lead to us having a "quiet and peaceable life."

Persecution may come to God's people, even from our own government and leaders, but it must always be for righteous living (Mt. 5:9-10) and standing for truth, and not civil disobedience that leads to greater disquiet and chaos.

Simply, in praying for our leaders in this present turmoil, we are told that we can enjoy greater freedom to pursue the work of God's Kingdom and Word, godliness, and worship. Does the world hear the anger of God's people, or the prayers of God's people for our nation and those in authority over us?

As you pursue your favored political agendas and vote — and these things you should do in freedom as a law-abiding citizen — make sure the world hears your prayers for our nation and leaders more than anything else you say. This honors God and shows faith in Him.

He added that Sequoyah is gorgeous but challenging.

"It's probably one of the prettiest courses that we will get to play," said Gearhart. "It's a really hard course and makes you have to think ahead about what kind of shots you have to give yourself."

Gearhart is coaching for his alma mater

and used to compete for Highlands School.

"It's pretty fun coaching at the school I graduated from and this group of guys that I have playing for me is a great group of boys," he said.

Yesterday's golf match in Cherokee was cancelled due to rain.



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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



## Authorities appointed by God

**Pastor Mark Ford**  
First Baptist Church  
Highlands

I have been thinking a bit about our political and social turmoil of late. I, like most of you, find myself an admixture of frustration, angst, anger, times of incredulity, and even breathless as I watch our political leaders and overall government falter and fail with regards to solving our nation's problems.

In our blessed democracy and republic, we have the hope of turning the page with each succeeding election. But in the meantime, we are often dispossessed of hope and positive outcomes as we witness incompetence, bad decisions, ignorance of our Judeo-Christian values, and a spirit of child-like behavior and vitriol that excludes unanimity regarding utilitarian goals and trust in God (do not forget that is on our money).

No form of government is without its weaknesses and flaws, and no majority – whether Republican or Democrat – is flawless in its exercise of power. Democracy is after all the rule of the people, and a republic the rule by representative government. And in both cases, we are talking about human beings – flawed, sinful, and imperfect. Thus, we should not be surprised at the constant flux of difficulties as it regards our own nation – though I would not trade for any other form but one. That one form of government is yet to come – a theocracy, or the rule of God. I like some of you yearn for that day increasingly.

But in the meantime, I and you have an obligation as believers to our present government and leaders.

First, we are told in Romans 13:1-7 (Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-17) to be in submission to our governing authorities as they are placed there by God. This goes only so far, of course, as we will always obey God's clear commands from His Word – "Seek first the Kingdom of God" Jesus taught us. Obey the laws of the land that are not contrary to Biblical values and teachings, and you will maintain a good witness before all people.

As Augustine taught, we have two citizenships – one in the city of man and one in the city of God. The latter takes precedence over the former, but I am still to be a good citizen in this nation.

Second, we are to pay our due taxes to empower the government to perform its duties of protecting the citizenry and maintaining order and peace and overall maintenance of our land.

Third, and most important, you and I are to pray for

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 17

## Proverbs 3:5

# • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (706) 782-3965

Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298

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Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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School; 10:30am Worship Service.

Mon. Night Bible Study & Dinner: 6pm. call for details.

### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

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Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.

Wednesdays – Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

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Sun.: 9:30am - Adult Sunday School; Worship Service 10:45am;

10:45am Children's Program. Youth-12:15 – 2:30pm Tues:

Women's Bible Study 10am-noon

Thurs: Men's Bible Study 7:30-8:30 a.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

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Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

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5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday Services in the Chapel: 8 am Rite I spoken, 10:30 Rite II

with Choir; Morning Prayer Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in the Chapel

Ash Wed. services March 2, 12 p.m., & 5 p.m.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m.. Choir: 6p

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Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

### HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

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### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. Marty Kilby

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

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### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am



# • FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from Feb. 10. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

## **Feb. 10**

• At noon, a forged transaction was reported by Gold n Clipper for \$125.

## **Feb. 17**

• At 10:44 p.m. officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 106.

## **Feb. 22**

• At 2 p.m., officers were called about a shoplifted incident at Bryson's Food Store where about \$8 worth of foodstuffs was taken.

## **Feb. 24**

• At 9:01 p.m. officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

• At 9:57 p.m., Matthew Austin Cargo, 37, of Franklin, was arrested DUI when making an unsafe movement on U.S. 64 west. He was issued an unsecured \$1,000 bond. His trial date is March 30.

## **Feb. 26**

• At noon, officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 28.

## **Feb. 27**

• At 11:22 a.m., officers performed a welfare check at a residence on Sage Drive.

• At 4:01 a.m., officers were called about personal property found at the High Dive on Carolina Way.

## **Feb. 28**

• At 11:07 a.m., Christopher Scott Flowers, 37, of Highlands, was arrested for Failure to Appear, driving aggressively, left of center on Upper Lake Road and Failure to Appear for possession of marijuana paraphernalia. He was issued a \$3,000 secured bond. His trial date was March 10.

## **March 2**

• At 4:45 p.m., officers were called about a larceny after breaking and entering at a residence on Bowery Road where an exterior door valued at \$500 was damaged and keys to a pump house, garage and vehicle were

taken.

• At 4:50 p.m. officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on U.S. 64 west.

## **March 6**

• At 2:08 a.m., Sofia Jean Hertel, 23, of Highlands, was arrested DUI at a stop light violation on NC 28. She was issued a \$1,000 unsecured bond. Her trial date is March 30.

## **The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Feb. 23**

### **Feb. 23**

• At 6:55 a.m. the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

• At 9:49 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 5:58 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital.

### **Feb. 24**

• At 9:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

### **Feb. 27**

• At 5:45 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Kettle Rock Road.

### **Feb. 28**

• At 9:22 a.m., the dept. was called to investigate the source of smoke at an area on Horse Cove Road.

• At 9:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on BigView Road.

## **March 2**

• At 4:48 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on U.S. 64 west.

## **March 3**

• At 1:45 p.m., was called to investigate a gas odor at a address on N. 4th Street.

## **March 4**

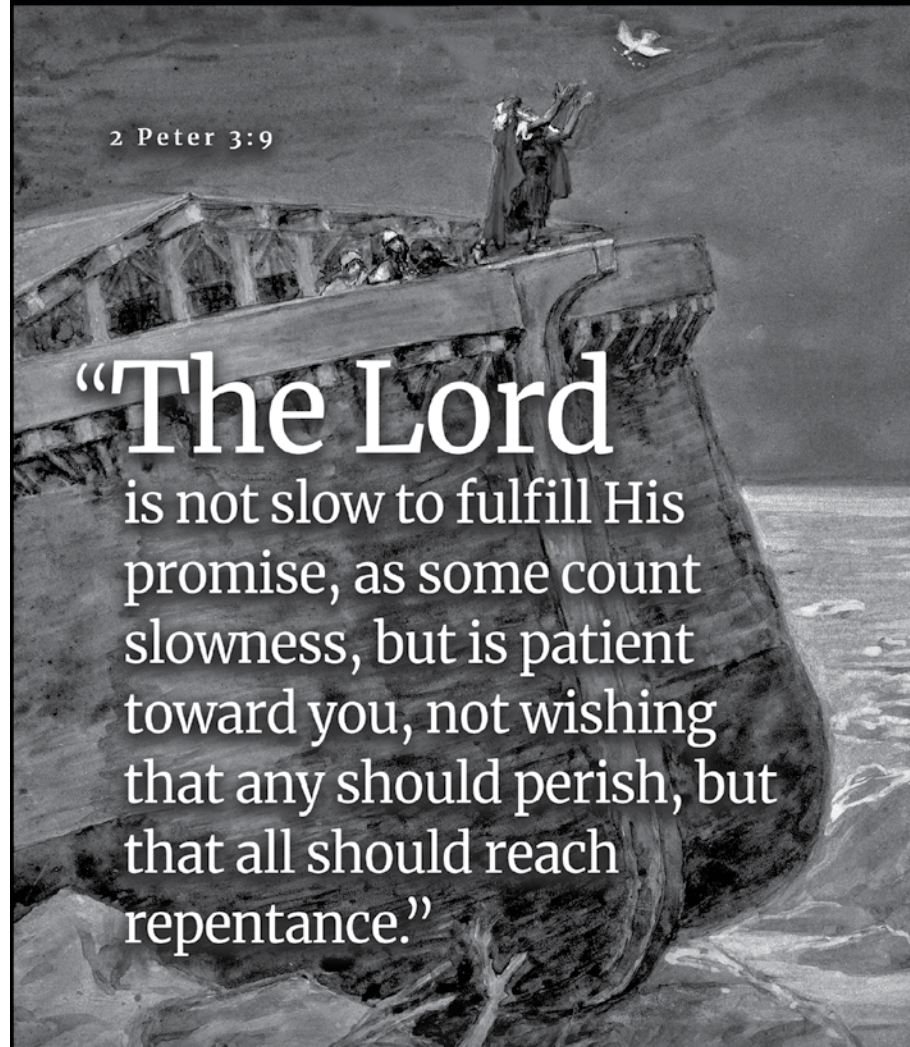
• At 11:26 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers FD.

• At 11:53 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Scaly FD.

• At 2:41 p.m. the dept. provided mutual aid to Scaly FD.

• At 4:24 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on VZ Top Road.

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**HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON:** scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208.

## ...FRAUD continued from page 1

spoke to Jake Tapper in August 2020, (see boxed quote) Meadows registered to vote by mail in Macon County, NC at an address located in Scaly Mountain, NC – a place at which he allegedly didn't actually reside.

Not only did Meadows register to vote at the Scaly Mountain location on September 22, 2020, his wife Debra also updated her voter registration to the same address, however her voter registration was updated on September 19.

The voter registration forms, which Macon County Board of Director Melanie Thibault confirmed were submitted by mail, ask for a residential address – “where you physically live” – and are signed “under penalty of perjury.”

However, according to reports from Charles Bethea of the New Yorker, Meadows may have never even visited the Scaly Mountain home, let alone lived there.

Both Meadows voted in the 2020 general election from the Scaly Mountain address with Mark listed as voting by absentee ballot; while Debra voted early in person.

To register to vote in North Carolina, a citizen must have lived in the county where they are registering and have resided there for at least 30 days before the date of the election, according to the state's board of elections.

According to Bethea's piece, the former owner (listed as Thomas Yarbrough according to Macon County GIS reports)

*“I don't want my vote or anyone else's to be disenfranchised. ... Do you realize how inaccurate the voter rolls are, with people just moving around. ... Anytime you move, you'll change your driver's license, but you don't call up and say, hey, by the way I'm re-registering.”*

*— Mark Meadows, at the time White House chief of staff, in an interview with CNN's Jake Tapper, Aug. 16, 2020*

told the New Yorker that Debra Meadows had rented the house once but spent only one or two nights there; but Mark Meadows never stayed at all.

The house was put on the market in the summer of 2020, but the owner said, Meadows never expressed interest in buying it.

Macon County Register of Deeds shows the property which is currently listed as Meadows' address – a 14-by-62-foot mobile home – sold on September 2, 2021 to a Kenneth Charles Abele for just over \$100,000.

Though Abele said that Meadows has not been to the property since he purchased it in September 2021, according to Macon County Board of Election rolls Meadows is still currently registered to vote there.

While their physical address was listed

at the Scaly Mountain property, the couple's voter registration included a PO Box located near Asheville as their mailing address.

The PO Box listed was closer to the Asheville apartment Meadows lived in in 2018 – something he said was done to save taxpayers money due to his frequent flights out of the Asheville Airport to go to Washington D.C.

### An Emerging Pattern

Both Mark and Debra voted in the March 3, 2020 Primary election under their Transylvania County address in Sapphire.

During the June 23, 2020 runoff election, Debra Meadows, who both endorsed and heavily campaigned for Lynda Bennett, cast her ballot.

To complicate matters further, the home address Debra was registered to vote

from located in Sapphire, NC in Transylvania County, was sold the same year on March 26 which means Debra voted at a residence she did not reside at. Mark did not cast a ballot during the runoff election.

North Carolina voter database has Debra voting under the Transylvania County address beginning in the May 2018 Primary until the June 23, 2020 runoff.

During the 2016 November general election, she cast her ballot in Buncombe County, however for the primary that same year she voted in Jackson County.

From 2004 until 2016 Debra voted under a Jackson County address. Mark was listed as a legacy voter in Macon County until 1998 and shows voting in person on election in Macon County from 2000 until 2004 when he switched to voting under a Jackson County address.

Mark then voted under the Transylvania address until November 2020 when it switched to the Macon County address in Scaly Mountain.

In 2021, Meadows purchased a three-story waterfront home in South Carolina for nearly \$1.6 million.

South Carolina requires that you update your driver's license within just 10 days of moving to a new address.

As of press time, according to Macon County Board of Election rolls, both Meadows are still currently listed to vote at the Scaly Mountain address.

## ...FOREST continued from page 13

management of forests to restore wildlife habitat.

In the past, “we've been riding the coattails of the commercial industry to get our wildlife and game habitat,” he said. “But we have to look at a whole new way to restore the forest.”

He thinks the plan is fair and balanced in regard to preservation and conservation values.

While the lower end of the plan's restoration goals is inadequate in his opinion, he has faith the agency will move past that with the support of additional resources from other agencies, such as the state's Wildlife Resources Commission and private organizations, such as the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Council.

Whitmire is concerned that “moving lines on a map may impact the footprint we have now” and limit the ability to restore habitat for game, birds and other wildlife.

Everyone, however, agrees that less conflict at the project level is desirable.

“There is a more elegant solution (than conflict),” said American Whitewater's Kevin Colburn, “but if you draw a map that includes chunks of land that people have strong feelings about, it won't go well for the people, the land or the agency.”

Colburn said the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership and other stakeholders offered maps and ideas to avoid conflict that the Forest Service didn't take.

“They missed some opportunities to make it easier to do good projects,” he said.

“It's not a problem of there not being enough forest or enough support for active management. It's really a question of where it happens.”

Colburn, however, understands that the Forest Service is not just a decision-maker but also a stakeholder.

“Their employees and experts have their own range of experiences on the landscape and views about the best ways to go about their jobs,” he said.

Regardless of the final plan and the allocation of acreage, Colburn is hopeful successful timber restoration projects will be developed.

“Lots of people will work to make sure that happens regardless of what the plan looks like,” he said.

“Good projects can come up. They did under the old plan, and they could under the new one.”

• *Correction and clarification: The U.S. Forest Service released a final environmental impact statement, also known as the FEIS, along with its management plan for the two Western North Carolina national forests in January. The FEIS was identified by the wrong name in the article as it initially appeared. The article also initially included a graphic showing the relationship between the suitable and unsuitable acreage areas for timber harvesting that was mathematically correct but could have given a false impression about the relationship between the two as a result of the size of shaded areas. so that graphic has been removed to avoid confusion.*



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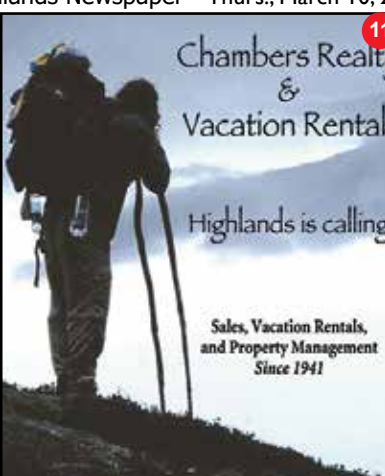
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