

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**NC Mountain Resources Technical Advisory Council (TAC)**  
**October 25, 2010**  
**1:00 – 3:00 PM**  
**RENCI Engagement Center in the Grove Arcade, Suite 116**  
**Asheville, NC**

*TAC Members in Attendance: Jim Fox, Karen Smith, Andy Brown, Marvin Hoffman, Rick Wooten, Eric Romaniszyn, Bill Yarborough, Walter Clark, DJ Gerken, David Ray*

*Others in Attendance: Judy Francis, Angie Chandler, Rob Bell*

### Call to Order

Jim Fox welcomed everyone to the RENCi engagement center. The facility was designed to be a location where local decision-makers and citizens can come and utilize technology to learn about the community. It is staffed by UNCA.

### Approval of September 17, 2010 Meeting Summary

Judy Francis asked the members to review the draft meeting summary that had previously circulated for accuracy. DJ Gerken made a motion to approve the summary as presented. Jim Fox seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

### Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Judy Francis reminded the members that they had discussed the need to elect officers at their last meeting. Since then, they had electronically shared brief bios of themselves with each other to acquaint themselves with each other's areas of expertise and experience. There was discussion about the need to have officers who were willing to share responsibilities to prepare for meetings and assist one another with details. During the last meeting, Bill Eaker had made a motion to nominate Jim Fox to be Chairman and David Ray to be Vice-Chairman. The motion was tabled until this meeting. David Ray said he was honored to be considered, but due to time constraints, he did not feel he was able to be considered for the role at this time. Andy Brown said he felt there was a need to have good geographic representation in the officers as well as in the membership as a whole. In that spirit, he made a motion to nominate Jim Fox as Chairman and Walter Clark as Vice Chairman. He said he thought that Jim had great knowledge of mapping and technical skills and now works in the Asheville region, and Walter had very useful experience with legal matters working with the coastal commission and now resides in the high country area. The motion received a second from Bill Yarborough and was approved unanimously.

### Discussion of How to Proceed with Recommendations to Commission Concerning Slope Issue

Judy Francis reminded the members that, during the last Commission meeting, there was a motion to request the Technical Advisory Council provide the Commission with recommendations concerning the slope issue. Jim Fox suggested that the discussion about the slope issue begin with an inquiry about what a recommendation package might look like and what sort of timeframe would be needed to put it together. DJ Gerken commented that legislators are working on this issue now in preparation for the upcoming session. If the Commission is going to weigh in, they will need to do it soon. Judy Francis reminded the members that it isn't the TAC's job to recommend policy – it's the council's job to tell the Commission what technical data they should consider so the Commission can determine what they want to include in any recommendations they decide to forward. Information gaps and action steps that can be taken now may be part of recommendations they decide to endorse.

There was general discussion that there is a lot of good information about the slope issue already available such as the Land of Sky slope report and some of the mapping efforts that have been completed. There are also some information gaps. Some counties have not had detailed slope hazards maps completed yet, and it may take years for all the counties to be completed as was discussed during the last Commission meeting. It is possible to make recommendations about what can be done now while acknowledging what we do not yet know.

Jim Fox suggested that each member read the Land of Sky slope report, paying particular attention to the recommendations that the report suggests. During the next meeting, each member should have a list of what you can't support from the report and anything that you think is missing that you can support. He also asked Rick Wooten to work with him to do a baseline map of the western region illustrating generalized slope patterns – even for counties that haven't had detailed maps yet. Rick said he could do this using ESRI model and will discuss possible categories with Jim. Jim asked members to bring recommendations to consider regarding data layers for the slope map to next meeting. Bill Yarborough asked if members could get copies of the four county slope ordinances and hear from the staff that are working with them. DJ said he had those ordinances in digital format and will circulate them to the members. Karen Smith mentioned that some municipalities also have slope ordinances and they may be worth considering as well.

There was additional discussion regarding the timing of recommendations. Walter Clark said that, from his experience on the coastal commission, that it takes time for the technical council and commission to get working relationship going. There will be cues about what is politically possible eventually, but it will take time for relationships to mature. Marvin Hoffman said he interested in fiscal impacts of slope regulations on counties. DJ Gerken said he did not think it is up to the Technical Advisory Council to determine what is politically dangerous. That is the Commission's decision. We should just give them the best technical information that is available. He said that the top priority is the credibility of the Commission. Judy will arrange a discussion with Chairman Gantt to clarify the issue of timing of the recommendations.

## Presentation Re: WNC Report on Forest Sustainability and Discussion on Expansion to Include Balance of MRC Covered Counties

Judy Francis provided some background information about the Commission's strategic objective of providing a "report card" type of project to assess and monitor the status of various natural, cultural, and economic attributes of the region. Other organizations, such as the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, are also interested in a project of this type. Jim Fox explained that he had been working on a project of this type in partnership with the US Forest Service called "The Western North Carolina Report Card on Forest Sustainability" which is tied to the principles outlined in the Montreal Accord.

A PowerPoint presentation gave a basic outline of the product which is designed to assist local governments and other groups in planning for a healthy and sustainable environment in 18 counties in the western region. After the presentation, there was general discussion from members of the group who thought that this may be a good match for the Commission report card goal. Everything is in a GIS database and utilizes a value-driven approach. According to the results so far, human infrastructure and economics are doing better than natural systems. The information is presented in a format that is color-coded with lots of graphics and photos. There are many maps to illustrate the rate of development, the spread of invasive plants, wildfires, climate change / temp change, droughts, ecosystem services, socioeconomic benefits, recreation, tourism, cultural attributes, etc.

Jim said that the data used in this iteration of the report card is the newest available, but some data is about to be updated with 2010 data. The cultural data for western North Carolina included here may be just a beginning point. How can this go from 18 to 28 counties? We need to work with the Councils of Governments in those expanded areas. It would have to be determined what data sets are current and what needs to be updated. Bill Yarborough asked if additional information, like floodplains and farmlands could be added. Jim said the Council could add anything as long as good data existed. DJ Gerken suggested that each member spend some time looking over the written report before the next TAC meeting and come back with suggestions for how we would want it to look. Jim said the report and additional information was available on the web at [www.wncforestreportcard.org](http://www.wncforestreportcard.org)

### Discussion of Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the Technical Advisory Council will be at the Jackson County Senior Center from 10:00 – noon on November 19.

The December meeting will be held on December 10 from 9:30 – 11:30 at the RENCI Engagement Center in the Grove Arcade in Asheville.

Judy reminded everyone that the Commission had established their 2011 meeting dates:

January 21

March 18

May 20

August 26

October 21

December 9

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.