

Meeting Agenda for Friday, October 13th, 2023, 9-11 am

Transylvania County Community Services Building, 106 E. Morgan St., Brevard, NC 28712

Zoom Link for Virtual Attendees: <https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/99238803725?pwd=MXZLeFlJNDhCNDdodHJoZlVwcmRYdz09>

9:00-10:00.....Program: “*Wildlife Passage in Gorges State Park*”
 Sarah McMullen, Wildlands Network

Creating wildlife-specific infrastructure over or under roads is a proven solution to increase wildlife habitat connectivity and prevent wildlife vehicle mortality, but these crossings are often focused on large-bodied mammals due to driver safety concerns. However, roads can pose an even greater conservation threat to smaller and less mobile species of conservation concern, such as reptiles and amphibians.

In 2009, Gorges State Park placed four small experimental culverts under the newly constructed park roads in the hopes of facilitating safe passage under the roadway for timber rattlesnakes (Crotalus horridus) and eastern box turtles (Terrapene carolina carolina), both species of conservation concern in North Carolina. Wildlands Network and the Timber Rattlesnake Conservation Alliance has been monitoring these structures since 2022 to determine if and what animals are using the structures.

The presentation will highlight the structure specifications, findings from our first two years of monitoring (including successful use of the culverts by timber rattlesnakes and a diversity of other wildlife such as long-tailed weasels, spotted skunks, wood rats, gray foxes, red foxes, bobcats, and multiple salamander species), and implications for encouraging the use of this type of smaller wildlife crossings when replacing or creating new road infrastructure in Western North Carolina to protect and conserve our diverse wildlife species.

10:00-11:00.....Business Meeting:

- Welcome & Introductions
- Approval of September Meeting Minutes
- Land Manager Updates
- Committee Member Updates
- Wild & Scenic River Resolution Update
- New Business

Tentative Programs Schedule:

TNRC Speakers (2023)			
Date	Speaker	Affiliation	Topic
August			
8-Sep-23	Dr. Jennifer Bauer	Appalachian Landslide Consultants	Landslide Hazard Mapping for Transylvania County
13-Oct-23	Dr. Liz Hilliard	Wildlands Network	Wildlife Passage Projects in Gorges State Park
10-Nov-23	Rachel Hess	USFS - Pisgah Ranger District	River Rangers Program
8-Dec-23	Jake Rash	Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture	Speckled Trout in Transylvania County

Possible future programs:

1. NC Growth – Smart UP Field Guide to Blueways (<https://ncgrowth.unc.edu/index.php/blueway-guide-launch/>)
2. Geology of Appalachian Mountains (Michael Follo)
3. User/entrance/parking fees for public recreational areas
4. Updated Forest Plan (USFS)
5. Dupont State Forest Master Plan
6. Rescues and Safety on Public Lands
7. Ecusta Trail Updates (COB)
8. Chronic Wasting Disease within White-tailed Deer (NCWRC)
9. Mussels of the French Broad

Announcements:

The next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Friday, November 10th from 9-11 AM** at the **Community Services Building**, located at **106 E. Morgan St., Brevard.**