

2021 WNC Communities Application

# BETHEL RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION



## COMMUNITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Your Community Center/Club's Name: **Bethel Rural Community Organization**

Your Community Club's Physical Address: **664 Sonoma Road, Waynesville, NC 28786**

Your Community Club's Phone Number: **Having a message phone installed**

Your Community Club's Mailing Address, if different from the physical address above:

**PO Box 1033, Waynesville, NC 28786**

Community Club's Website Address (if any). If none, enter "None." [www.bethelrural.org](http://www.bethelrural.org) and [bethelhalfmarathonand5k@gmail.com](mailto:bethelhalfmarathonand5k@gmail.com)

Community Club's Facebook Page Address (if any). If none, enter "None." **Bethel Rural Community Organization (Category: Non-Profit)**

First and Last Name of person filling out this application: **Evelyn Coltman**

Email address of person filling out this application: [evelyn3226@charter.net](mailto:evelyn3226@charter.net)

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

1. Please list the names, phone numbers, and emails of your officers. If you do not have a listed title filled, please enter "none" in each field for that officer.

President: **Mike McLean, 828-275-4057, [memclean@aol.com](mailto:memclean@aol.com)**

VP: **Greg Christopher, 838-734-3679, [greg.christopher@haywoodcountync.gov](mailto:greg.christopher@haywoodcountync.gov)**

Secretary: **Beth Cook, 828-734-8776, [ehc78@bellsouth.net](mailto:ehc78@bellsouth.net)**

Treasurer: **Stephanie Quis-Garrett, 908-642-5016, [smallshells56@gmail.com](mailto:smallshells56@gmail.com)**

Other: Board Chair: **Tom Kolaski, 828-558-7593, [tom.kolaski@gmail.com](mailto:tom.kolaski@gmail.com)**

Board 1 Year Presidential Appointee and Vice-Chair: **Pat Carr, 828-648-0075; [carr4pat@aol.com](mailto:carr4pat@aol.com)**

Board 2 Year Term – 2022: **Frances Adamson; 828-648-7292; [mulemom9@gmail.com](mailto:mulemom9@gmail.com)**

Board 3 Year Term – 2023; **Lucas Sorrells; 828-734-4099; [lucas@jerue.com](mailto:lucas@jerue.com)**

Board – Presidential term: **Mike McLean; 828-275-4057; [memclean@aol.com](mailto:memclean@aol.com)**

2. How many households are in your community approximately? **Approximately 2,500**
3. Which of the following specific programs coordinated by WNC Communities did your community club participate in during the past year (if any)? Check all that apply:
  - U.S. Census: WNC Communities Get Counted partnership with Dogwood Health Trust - **Yes**
  - USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program partnership with Baptist on Mission - **Yes**
  - COVID vaccination outreach or pop-up clinic partnership with DHT/MAHEC/Your County
  - None of the above

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

4. Does your community have written bylaws? Choose the description below that best matches your community's situation:
  - a) No, OR if yes, they have NOT been reviewed and/or updated in over 10 years
  - b) Yes - some have been developed and approved by the board, but they are weak or are not being used consistently
  - c) Yes - quite well developed, approved by our board, and we're using them regularly
  - d) Yes - fully developed, approved by our board, used regularly, revisited annually with appropriate adjustments made, and include Conflict of Interest and Whistleblower clauses – **Conflict of Interest, but no whistleblower clause**
5. How often do you meet on average (in a typical, non-COVID year) and how do you run your meetings? Please choose one:
  - a) Regularly and at least 6x per year
  - b) At least monthly with public attendance (open meetings)
  - c) Board meets at least monthly (open meetings) and we have committees that meet regularly
  - d) Board meets at least monthly (with open meetings) with report outs given by committees in advance of those meetings
  - e) **Other: Board meets every month; membership meets every other month**
6. Is your community center/club a 501c3 tax exempt organization?
  - No
  - **Yes**
7. If yes, what is your Tax ID number? (Do not enter any dashes). **342063022**
8. What is the status of your Strategic Plan? Please choose one:
  - a) We have no written Strategic Plan yet. **We have a plan that is identified via our budget process, committee duties as outlined in our policies and procedures, and approved projects; it is not labeled as a strategic plan. A synopsis is attached.**
  - b) We are working on a plan and currently have strategic goals. They are attached.
  - c) We have a written strategic plan that is being implemented. We have attached our plan.
  - d) We revisit our strategic plan annually and track our progress. We have attached our plan indicating which items we have already accomplished through June 2021.
9. If you answered that you have strategic goals or a Strategic Plan in the question above, please attach.
10. (Optional question) Please describe briefly any other long-term sustainability planning you are doing (such as a Building Management Plan) and attach that plan below, indicating any progress through June 2021. (Limit: 60 words)

Optional: Upload your Building Management Plan or other long term sustainability plan if you answered Question 10 above:

## LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

11. How many board members do you currently have? **5**
12. How many of your current board members are new this year? **0 (Elected for 2-year term)**
13. Which of the following best describes your board's level of leadership development?
  - A) We have officers: President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer.
  - B) In addition to officers, we have other board members and recruit new board members annually, with rotation of at least one new member coming on board.
  - C) We have officers/board members and other community leaders recruit and mentor community members to take on future leadership roles. We have ongoing rotation of officers and board members and provide opportunities for volunteers to take on committee leadership roles. - **Yes**
  - D) We have all of the above plus a diverse board representative of our community with ongoing opportunities for the community to engage with the board.
14. In the past 2 years, indicate whether your current officers, Board and/or your still-actively-volunteering, past board members have attended training on the following topics in support of your community club. Check all that apply.
  - None
  - Volunteer recruitment & retention – **Yes (1)**
  - Financial management – **Yes (1) (QuickBooks)**
  - Grant writing – **Yes (3) (HCC)**
  - Fundraising
  - Recruiting and cultivating board officers **Yes (1)**
  - Non-profit governance-related training
  - Strategic planning – **Yes (1)**
  - Other - please describe below: **leadership, historic preservation, food safety training for food pantries by MANNA**
15. Share any additional information regarding your leadership structure and recruitment (for example: do you have committees or programs with community volunteer leadership?) (Limit: 200 words)
  - **BRCO: board directed - officer facilitated - committee managed**
  - **Projects: committee suggested - board approved**
  - **Committees: oversight of their projects, relatively free to manage, within budget, without micromanagement from board/officers**
  - **Board, Officers, Members, and Committee Chairs: frequently recruit new people as members and officers**
  - **Committee Chairs: BRCO members**
  - **Committees: BRCO members/non-members**
  - **Beautification/Maintenance: volunteers are BRCO members doing on-site beautification/upkeep**
  - **Benevolence: filters requests/grants assistance for community members in need**
  - **Education: works with schools to grant awards/scholarship and also furnishes BRCO speakers.**

- **Food Pantry:** volunteer members bring food from MANNA, sort/organize food, and pack boxes. Non-member volunteers assist on pantry day with carrying/loading boxes and clean-up.
- **Historic Preservation:** members are local and as far away as Florida and Montana. Research online/archival info/records, take online/in-person trainings/workshops, visit/assist in preservation of historic sites, and coordinate with research facilities (WCU, NCDNCR, and Preservation NC).
- **5K/Half Marathon Race:** coordinates runners, volunteers, media, sponsors, and utilizes as many as 100 volunteers on race day
- **Rural Preservation:** coordinate with farms/BRCO's food pantry's coupon program. Work to give personal/financial support to Bethel Middle School (FFA projects), landowners' conservation easement requests, and non-profits/agencies concerned with conservation (Buy Haywood, Monarch Waystation at Shelton House, Haywood Waterways, and Hemlock Restoration Initiative).

#### FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

16. What is the status of your community club's financial plan? Choose the one that most closely represents your club's current situation:

- A) We have a bank account, a spreadsheet for tracking income and expenses, and someone in charge of keeping our books in order.
- B) We have the above, plus an annual budget which includes utility and maintenance costs that is approved by the Board. – **Yes – we do have a CD and savings account with reserve funds. In addition, our financial management efforts are moving to QuickBooks online to improve documentation, budget planning, and reporting to the board and membership.**
- C) We have the above, plus a financial plan showing how we will meet our annual budget goals for program and facility improvements through fundraising, grant writing, and other income generating activities. We have attached our plan below.
- D) We have the above, plus we maintain a reserve fund with a fund balance of at least 3 months of operating costs. We have attached our plan below.
- E) We have no approved budget, or no consistent way of tracking income and expenses, or no one set person who is doing that.

Please upload your financial plan if you answered C or D above on Question 16.

- 17. For those who have an annual budget, what is the total amount of your annual budget? (If you have no annual budget, please mark 0). **2020 - \$50,925 (COVID Budget scaled down to \$32,877). Spent \$24,299 in 2020. 2021 Budget - \$40,782.**
- 18. What is the total amount of income you generated for the past year (July 2020 - June 2021) from space rental, fundraisers, grants, and other sources? **\$23,693**
- 19. When looking at the total money you brought in this past year, what amount did your community club bring in:
  - a) from income-generating activities such as renting your facility? **\$9,240**
  - b) from grants? **\$4,000**

- c) from fundraising events? Race \$ 124
  - d) other? \$10,329
  - e) If you answered that you had other sources of income above, please describe briefly.
  - f) Census - \$1,720; CD Interest - \$410; Sales - \$1,578; Donations from Individuals - \$2,575; Donations from Churches - \$2,046; Donations from businesses \$2,000; Total from other sources: \$10,329
20. What grants have you received in the past year (July 2020 - June 2021)? Please include name of grant funder, what it was for, and the amount. If you received none, please enter N/A. (50 words)  
Farm Bureau - \$500; Haywood EMC - \$750; Hometown Hardware - \$250 for Rural Preservation/Food Pantry coupon project; Haywood County Commissioners - \$2,000 – general; WNC Communities - \$500 – Total from grants: \$4,000
21. (Optional question) Narrative: If you've had a very successful fundraiser with lessons learned that could help other communities, please describe it below. Please include total income, expenses, volunteer hours, any partners, what made it so successful, and any tips that could be helpful to other communities wishing to take on a similar project. (Limit: 500 words)

**COLOR CODE: INCOME - EXPENSES – HOURS – PARTNERS**

Our largest fundraiser, 5K/Half Marathon Race became a virtual race. That approach proved unsuccessful, with lost income from runner fees/sponsors. Instead of 250 runners (pre-COVID), we had 5. Instead of dozens of sponsors, we had 6. Instead of \$15,000 income, we made only \$124. (\$124) (\$0) (30 Hours). Fortunately, some longtime business donors continued to fund our race/organization (Hometown Hardware, John Highsmith DDS, Johnson Tomato, Rogers Express, Riverview Farm Supply, Underwood Dills (\$2,000) (\$0) (6 Hours) (6 Partners).

TOTAL INCOME - RACE/SPONSORS: \$2,124

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$0

TOTAL HOURS: 36

TOTAL PARTNERS: 6

Since our major fundraiser income was non-existent, fundraising efforts depended on several smaller projects. What was particularly successful this year was our income for the food pantry (FP) that occurred after publicity about our pantry program and the dire need brought in numerous donations (2 Hours). Passersby could see the long line of people waiting for food boxes, thus generating open pockets (Martha Sue Haney, Michael/Catherine Hertel, Carolyn Nettles, Michael Reeser, Harold/Joan Stines, Deborah Thomas) (\$1,060)(\$0)(6 hours)(8 Partners). Churches (Crestview, Encouraging Word, Riverside) upped their donations for the pantry program (\$2,046)(\$0) (3 hours)(3 Partners). In addition, three donors for the farm produce coupon program were generous (Farm Bureau, Haywood EMC, Hometown Hardware)(\$1,500)(\$0) (3 Hours)(3 Partners). Coupons are a joint project between the FP and Rural Preservation (RP) Committees. (60 Hours).

TOTAL INCOME - FP/RP FUNDRAISER: - \$4,606

TOTAL EXPENSE: \$0  
TOTAL HOURS: 74; (FP – 2003)  
TOTAL PARTNERS: 14

Our successful way of bringing in funding is through facility rental. Since we are fortunate that our community center is a beautiful historic church, we rent the facility to Harmony Baptist Church on Sundays/Wednesday evenings (\$9,000)(\$0). To ensure their continued rental arrangement, the board revisited and upgraded our rental agreement to be more accommodating to Harmony Baptist and BRCO (7 Hours). In addition, we rent the dining hall for meetings and events. This year, because of COVID, other rentals of the dining hall were down to 4 rentals. (Mosa Meadows HOA, Pigeon/Cecil Precinct, Pisgah View Heights HOA, Sorrells family) (\$240) (\$0) (8 Hours) (5 Partners).

TOTAL INCOME - RENTALS: \$9,240  
TOTAL EXPENSES : \$0  
TOTAL HOURS: 15  
TOTAL PARTNERS: 5

One approach that has proven to be an ongoing successful funding source is the fact that, since 2010, BRCO sells products developed by 3 committee. BRCO continues to add to our historic and rural preservation documentation via art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs. These are advertised on our website, and some are sold at two local shops (Blue Ridge Books, Shelton House) (\$1,578)(\$57.16) (67 Hours)(2 Partners). These items serve a dual purpose of documenting our local history and rural conservation. In addition, the Beautification Committee make/sells floral arrangements from Sloan's Plant Farm for our meetings (\$90) (\$51.57) (30 Hours) (1 Partner).

TOTAL INCOME - SALES: \$1,668  
TOTAL EXPENSES: \$108.73  
TOTAL HOURS - SALES: 97  
TOTAL PARTNERS: 3

TOTAL INCOME FROM ALL: \$17,638  
TOTAL EXPENSES: \$108.73  
TOTAL HOURS: 222  
TOTAL PARTNERS: 28

### **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

22. Please enter your total number of volunteers for this year (July 2020 - June 2021): 60 jobs– Some served in more than one capacity. 33 people do most of the work.
23. Total volunteer hours for the year: Beautification – 102 ; Maintenance – 61; Benevolence - 12; Education - 35; Food Pantry – 2,003; Historic Preservation - 526; Race - 30; Rural Preservation – 125; Organizational - 1,006 = 3,900 Hours

24. How many active volunteers did you have this past year? (“Active” means a volunteer who helped on at least 3 different activities or on the same activity on at least 3 different dates for your club. They didn’t just support one event for a few hours but showed repeated engagement.) **Beautification – 7 , Maintenance - 4 , Benevolence - 2 , Education - 3, Food Pantry - 18, Historic Preservation - 8, Race - 3 , Rural Preservation - 2; Organizational – 13; Total 60 – some served in several capacities**
25. Total youth volunteers under the age of 22: **0**
26. What is the status of your volunteer recruitment and retention? Choose one.
- We don't have a plan yet.
  - We have regular volunteer appreciation to help with retention. **- Yes**
  - We have recognition and have attached our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan, including for youth, below.
  - We have recognition, an active youth program, and have attached our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan, which also shows our progress through June.

Attach your community’s Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan if you answered C or D to the question above. If you answered D, be sure to indicate your progress to date on your plan.

## **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

For each of the 5 categories below, check the programs that your community club has initiated or actively supported with volunteers and/or other resources.

### **27. Education Access and Quality**

These are programs that provide education access for youth or adults that contribute to elevating members’ abilities to gain employment or otherwise support their families and enhance their lives, or for children to improve their access to growth and development. Check the ones your club provides:

- Scholarships **- Yes**
- Financial workshops
- Job skills training
- Language classes
- Literacy assistance
- Tutoring
- Early childhood education – **Awards for scholastic achievement as well as most improved in STEM classes in grades 1 – 5 at Bethel Elementary School**
- Assistance with enrolling in higher education
- None of the above
- Other education access or quality improvement programs:
  - **Offer training about our rural preservation programs at Leadership Haywood (cancelled this year)**



- Present quality programs to educate our membership at our bi-monthly meetings (only 1 program occurred post-COVID)
- Present educational programs to the local schools
- We present programs to historical and other groups. Pre-COVID, we had planned a National Register of Historic Places program with NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources and WNC Communities to other community organizations - cancelled due to COVID.
- Put together a program for Rotary - cancelled due to COVID.
- Selected to do a program for the Waynesville Historic Commission about our historic preservation initiatives - cancelled due to COVID.
- Rural Preservation Committee works with the Bethel Middle FFA program to offer support for FFA specific programs such as competitions; we supported/funded FFA's building Monarch butterfly hatching boxes, and we distributed them to interested parties.
- Participated in the Blue Ridge Heritage Festival at Shelton House to educate attendees about our benevolence and historic and rural preservation programs.
- Participated in Shelton House's Tinsel Trail competition and received highest honors voted by attendees for our tree. Decorations educated about BRCO's many programs.
- Created a collection of art prints, books, CDs, DVDs, and historic markers that educate about Bethel history and rural preservation efforts in Bethel.
- Website is filled with educational information about Bethel, our organization, its programs, local history, and our environmental and rural conservation efforts.
- Members attend numerous workshops and seminars to assist with the efforts of specific committee endeavors (most were ZOOM this year).
- Newsletter every other month
- Frequent newspaper articles

## 28. Economic Stability

These are programs that support economic stability in your community by providing people with greater access to income, housing, internet, or other supports that help them stabilize financially. Check the ones your club provides:

- Job creation
- Entrepreneurial support – Yes - List Bethel businesses and descriptions on our website
- Helping people out of poverty through easing their access to housing
- Supporting workforce development
- Small business development or incubation
- Providing access to internet
- Coordinating installation of broadband
- Empowering access to healthy, affordable food through a community garden, gardening classes, or development of farmers' markets (see Benevolence below for giving away food)- Yes
- None of the above
- Other programming that helps people gain economic stability: Yes

- Rural Preservation (RP) Committee coordinates with sponsors Farm Bureau, Haywood EM, and Hometown Hardware as well as local farmers to offer a food coupon program that entitles the coupon bearer to fresh produce. Families in need visit local farms and use the coupons to receive fresh fruit and vegetables free of charge. BRCO later reimburses the farms for the coupons they have collected (\$10 per coupon). The program is operated through our Food Pantry Committee.
- RP Committee also sponsors Haywood Advancement Foundation's Buy Haywood program that encourages attendance at local farms, food stands, farmers markets, restaurants, and value-added businesses via a brochure.
- Benevolence Committee offers support to families, primarily for heating/utilities assistance through Duke Power, Haywood EMC, and McElroy Oil. Our program is a stopgap measure to assist people with encouragement to become more self-sustaining.

## 29. Community Well-being

These are programs that support cultural preservation, social cohesion, and/or helping others in your community. Check the ones your club provides:

- Preserving traditions, heritage, and/or language - **Yes**
- Preserving historical buildings -**Yes**
- Bringing people together to share, connect, and enjoy each other at events such as Trunk or Treat, dances, holiday dinners, festivals, etc. – **Yes (picnic)**
- Benevolence. Giving assistance to those in need such as food distribution, food or clothing pantries, Christmas giving tree, helping distressed families with bills or funerals, etc. - **Yes**
- Holding classes related to culture, independent living, arts, having fun, or other helpful topics.
- Community interest/special topic guest speakers - **Yes**
- Promoting awareness of and opportunities to engage in issues that are important to your community, and/or providing a forum for candidates or elected officials to speak to citizens and hear their concerns - **Yes**
- Programs that promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and inclusiveness
- Programs that bring elders together with youth or that otherwise foster cross-generational appreciation
- None of the above
- Other programs to support community well-being: **Focus on historic preservation topics:**
  - Filmed people for a DVD who are knowledgeable about historic schools in Bethel
  - Created a collection of art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs, and historic markers about Bethel history that not only educate but create a sense of pride in the community
  - Have focused on creating a historical record of all of the cemeteries in Bethel which creates a sense of community reverence
  - Promote land conservation and environmental stewardship awareness
  - Meeting speakers typically focus on topics that promote community well-being.
  - During non-COVID settings, our FP participants receive information about social and governmental programs available to them.

## 30. Environmental Stewardship

These are programs that help your community protect the environment or natural resources, address climate change, or foster appreciation of nature. Check the ones your club provides:

- Spearheading trash pickup efforts on an ongoing basis
- Beautification of your community - **Yes** –
  - **Create attractive historic markers to beautify and educate**
  - **Maintain/mow a local historic site**
  - **Created a water garden and rock garden, lawn maintenance, and tree trimming at our facility**

Installing recycling facilities at your facility and promoting recycling in the community – **Yes** –

- **Recycle and trash bins at the community center**
- Reducing energy and water use in your community facility – **Yes** –
  - **replaced the entire water filtration and conditioning system for the well water to our building. The original 1965 system was outdated and was allowing ill-treated water to cause problems with plumbing fixtures and drinking water. The new system has a pre-filter to trap contaminants for regular cleaning and state-of-the-art birm tank for pre-set back flushing.**
- Promoting weatherization or water efficiency in your community and providing related resources to residents
- Creating animal habitat on your facility campus or elsewhere or otherwise protecting biodiversity – **Yes**
  - **Several of our members have established habitat in order to enhance biodiversity and attract Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. They use their gardens to demonstrate to others as to why it is critical to the Monarch life cycle to protect and maintain a diverse habitat that includes milkweed and other native plants.**
  - **We also oversee a Heritage Garden/Monarch Way Station at a local museum.**
- Cleaning up creeks of trash or otherwise protecting streams (i.e., preventing stormwater runoff, creating protective policies in collaboration with your city, etc.)
- Removing invasive plant species
- Creating conservation easements to preserve wildlife areas or farmland – **Yes.**
  - **Continually talk to neighbors and farmers to encourage participation in voluntary ag districts and conservation easements.**
  - **Assist in the financial costs related to the process.**
  - **Have overseen placement of 543 acres and 20,000 feet of stream frontage in conservation easement.**
- None of the above
- Other environmental stewardship programs:
  - **Previously sponsored a Hemlock Woolly Adelgid treatment workshop by Hemlock Restoration Initiative and continue to facilitate contact with that organization to those who need the service**

### **31. Health Access**

These are programs that help your community members to understand and access health services and/or promote their own health. Check the ones your club provides:

- Assistance with SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare, health insurance access, - **Yes (not during COVID)**

- Telehealth,
- Opioid, smoking, or addiction education and prevention resources,
- Healthy eating and cooking classes
- Transportation services to primary health care appointments, etc.
- Free mental health evaluations and/or counseling
- Create and maintain a walking or biking trail to enable exercise – Yes –
  - \$750 donation to Bethel Middle School for annual track maintenance/lighting for walking track
- Provide and maintain athletic facilities such as playgrounds, basketball courts or soccer fields where people can exercise or organize athletic clubs for people to play sports together
- Provide exercise classes such as yoga, dance, weightlifting, or other
- None of the above
- Other healthcare access programs - please list and describe briefly:
  - Benevolence efforts include programs designed to assist with dental care for local children and
  - Program to provide vision care for children and adults

### 32. Narrative

Please elaborate on 1 - 3 specific programs you have checked above that best illustrate your positive impact on your community. In your description, include your club's role, what staffing and other resources you provided, whether you partnered with other agencies to deliver these services, who was impacted, how they were impacted, and any other details that help us understand why you are proud of your program(s). (Limit: 1500 words)

## EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY

### Organizational

- Publish a newsletter in non-meeting months - features current activities of each committee and reaches members/non-members in the community and beyond
- Continually update our website which is filled with educational information about our organization, every committee, programs, local history, and environmental and rural conservation efforts Sale items are purchased via our website: [www.bethelrural.org](http://www.bethelrural.org).
- Have Facebook through which viewers are able to learn about our programs and projects.
- Visitors can contact us with questions via our email: [haywoodbrco@gmail.com](mailto:haywoodbrco@gmail.com).
- Race has its own Facebook and website. <http://www.bethelhalfmarathonand5k.weebly.com/>
- Participated in the Blue Ridge Heritage Festival, sharing a booth with the Haywood County Historical Society, at the Museum of NC Handicrafts – a venue for distributing our brochures, selling our CDs and DVDs, and educating the public about our programs.
- Participated in the Shelton House Tinsel Trail - voted top prize by viewers. Decorations educated about our projects.
- Developed general organizational brochures and hand-outs about our rural preservation endeavors that make the public aware of our programs and projects.
- 24 volunteers

### Education Committee

- \$1,000 Pisgah High scholarship selected by committee of 13; publicity in local media
- Support Journey Scholarship applications with WNC Communities
- STEM achievement awards at Bethel Elementary (\$50 each – 8 awards); publicity
- Citizenship award at Bethel Middle (\$50); publicity
- Host speakers at meetings selected from a variety of areas of expertise and local interest.
- At our only open meeting this year, our speaker from Folkmoot, NC's premier festival, was accompanied by 2 entertainers who performed.
- Cancelled speakers this year: Boy Scouts, Haywood Spay/Neuter, Healthy Haywood, Inman Chapel restoration project, Mountain Projects, and REACH.
- Participate in trainings at schools and civic groups
- Cancelled programs this year due to COVID: Leadership Haywood about our rural preservation successes, NCDNCR/WNC Communities about the National Register of Historic Places application process, Rotary, and Waynesville Historic Commission.
- 14 members)

### Food Pantry (FP) Committee

- Uses its venue, not only to provide food security for dozens of Bethel families, but also to educate about food choices and about local programs that support a sustainable lifestyle. We typically connect with the Department of Aging and Adult Services, during a non-COVID year, to make FP participants aware of all of the programs that are available to them, such as SNAP, Medicare, Medicaid, and other health and social services programs.
- 18 members

### Historic Preservation (HP) Committee

- Members attend in-person/Zoom trainings/seminars conducted by the NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (NCDNCR), WNC Historical Association, and Preservation NC. Members watched several seminars on Zoom rather than in person. (Asheville's Monuments – Past and Present, Cherokee Mounds and Village Sites, Drovers Road, Early Settlers of WNC, Josephus Daniels, and the Wilmington Riot of 1898).
- Have created 25 art prints, 6 books, 3 DVDs, 2 CDs, and 5 historic markers that provide massive amounts of historical documentation about our community and Haywood County.
- Art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs, sold on our website, at Blue Ridge Books, and at Shelton House Museum, have gone to counties throughout NC and to dozens of states and serve as educational tools.
- As an indication of the quality of our documentation and educational efforts, our HP Committee has received 6 NC Society of Historians Awards for our work, including, in 2020, one of the top 5 awards (Lighthouse Award) for our documentation of and education about local history via our art print collection.
- HP Committee chair participated in the 2020 Zoom awards ceremony to educate 50 + historians throughout the state about our art print collection and our historic preservation emphasis.
- Grant an annual Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation whose recipient attends our meeting as the guest speaker. We present a program about the honoree's preservation

efforts. Our 2020 award went to workers who restored Inman Chapel (Bob and Phyllis Barnett). The 2020 meeting was cancelled due to COVID.

- HP Committee, as well as individual committee members, frequently publishes articles in local media (*The Mountaineer* and *Positively Haywood*) that focus on Bethel history.
- Work and consult with preservation entities such as WCU's Department of Archives and Mountain Heritage Center as well as the NCDNCR to update historical information concerning our community so that we may use it to educate our members and the public. Topics of research this year include Bethel Cemeteries and their locations, including 2 slave cemeteries, historic schools of Bethel, Bethel Cannery, and Bethel Writers.
- Continually filming sessions connected with the current DVD in progress - *Historic Schools of Bethel* - we filmed sessions with Ann Crawford and Brenda Raulerson at Cruso School, Carroll Jones, Edie Burnette, and Wendy and J.R. Rogers concerning the Hargrove connection to early Bethel schools, Wayne Woody at Laurel Branch Church (formerly a historic school), and John and Phyllis Gaddis at their home which was previously the Mountain Grove School. Many of these people are elderly; capturing their knowledge and memories on film is the best way to preserve and document our history. Videographer, Doug Chambers, is an excellent editor.
- Erected signage at 5 local historical sites which serves to educate travelers as they traverse the roads in Bethel. We are working with NCDOT to erect another historic marker at Truss Bridge #79, NC's oldest metal truss bridge, which we previously placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Have overseen National Register designation of 2 sites and are working on another.
- Provide upkeep of an 1800s historical site: Pigeon Gap Watering Hole.
- On the TDA's Haywood County Quilt Trail
- 19 members

#### Rural Preservation (RP) Committee

- Affiliates with Bethel Middle FFA to promote farm and rural conservation competitions and projects
- Funded construction by FFA students of Monarch butterfly boxes
- Assisted with Monarch box distribution, a project that will enhance Monarch survivability
- RP Committee chair instructs about conservation of Monarchs and Monarch habitat via upkeep of the Heritage Garden at the Museum of NC Handicrafts.
- Produced 2 DVDs which it continues to sell in order to educate about rural and farmland conservation, with one DVD distributed to every county in NC for the ongoing training of school FFA programs.
- Educates landowners about farmland, rural, and water conservation programs
- Affiliates with the Haywood Advancement Foundation to sponsor the *Buy Haywood* brochure that directs hundreds of visitors to local farms, produce stands, historical agricultural sites, farm-to-table restaurants, and value-added businesses in Haywood County in an effort to promote local businesses and our rich agricultural heritage. Buy Haywood strives to improve the well-being of the county by working to bring together the various public and private groups necessary to promote job creation and economic development.
- On Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Blue Ridge Heritage Trail
- 3 members

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

**BRCO's RP, HP, and Beautification Committees focus on sustainability and stewardship. A summary of projects points to BRCO's role in protecting the environment and historic structures:**

- Oversees the Heritage Garden/Monarch Waystation at Shelton House museum
- Maintains a historic structure and grounds, rock garden, water garden, and trims historic trees at the community center
- Oversees health of the historic Osborne Boundary Oak
- Provides financial/educational support for Bethel Middle's FFA program, including providing competition jackets and purchasing materials the students need in order to build Monarch butterfly cages that are used to protect Monarch caterpillars while also educating people about the Monarch life cycle.
- Distributed Monarch boxes to and educated members and others who are setting up pollinator gardens so that they can transfer caterpillars from the cages to their gardens.
- Sponsors an agricultural sustainability program, Buy Haywood, which promotes our local agrarian heritage with a brochure that directs visitors to farms, food stands, restaurants, historic agricultural sites, farmer's markets, and value-added businesses.
- Supports financially and solicits participation in the activities of Haywood Waterways Association that oversees water conservation projects in Haywood County
- Has produced 2 DVDs that educate about sustainable farming practices in Bethel – available for purchase and distributed to FFA's in all 100 NC counties
- Oversees the coupon project, sponsored by businesses, that affiliates with BRCO's food pantry to provide fresh produce to families in need while also supporting purchases from local agricultural facilities
- Has funding available and provides educational instruction about the process of placing farm and rural land and waterways in protective easements – responsible for 543 acres/20,000 feet of stream frontage in easements
- Provides a training session for Leadership Haywood about BRCO's rural conservation agenda (cancelled because of COVID)
- Having partnered with Hemlock Restoration Initiative to conduct a Hemlock Restoration workshop in 2020, RP remains as a contact to direct individuals in need of treating the hemlock woolly adelgid
- Includes information on BRCO's website about environmental data associated with Bethel
- Replaced water filtration/conditioning system at our facility that provides cleaner water, traps contaminants, and has a birm tank for pre-set backflushing
- Supports preservation of historic sites, including placing 2 on the National Register of Historic Places. HP Committee is working with NCDNCR concerning a third potential National Register listing.
- BRCO's 5 local historic markers indicate our concern for preserving historic locations, and we are working with NCDOT to locate our sixth.
- Oversee grounds maintenance of one local historic site.
- Three art prints feature environmental topics





## COLLABORATION

33. Please check all Community Partners within your community with whom you collaborated on projects in the past year:

- Local schools (pre, K-12) – Yes – Bethel Elementary, Bethel Middle, Pisgah High, Haywood Early College
- Local community college or university
- Churches - Yes – Crestview Baptist, Encouraging Word Baptist, Harmony Baptist, Riverside Baptist
- Farms – Yes – Chambers Farm, Leatherwood Farm, Ten Acre Farm
- Local Businesses. Please list: Douglas Chambers Videography, Hometown Hardware, Inman Tree Service, JW Johnson Tomato, Jukebox Junction, Sloan's Plant Farm
- Police/Sheriff Department – Yes – Haywood County Sheriff's Department
- Fire Department – Yes Center Pigeon Fire Department; Lake Logan Fire Department
- 4-H
- Other: Mosa Meadows HOA, Pigeon/Cecil Precinct, Pisgah View Heights HOA, Sorrells family

34. Please check all Community Partners outside your community with whom you collaborated on projects in the past year:

- Council on Aging
- County Extension Office - Yes
- MANNA Food Bank - Yes
- Goodwill
- Community college or university outside your community – Yes – Haywood Community College (seminars), Western Carolina University (Archives)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Development Authority - Yes
- City/County government - Yes
- Health and Human Services – Yes – Agreement with Haywood County Health Department for dental services for Bethel students
- Boys Club or Girls Club
- Boy or Girl Scouts
- Other communities Yes – Cruso Community, Saunook Community, County Council of Community Clubs
- Other:
  - Businesses: Blue Ridge Books, Dave McCarson Landscaping, Duke Power, Haywood EMC, Haywood Farm Bureau, John Highsmith, DDS, Mountaineer, Positively Haywood, Riverview Farm Supply, Rogers Express, Sherwin Williams, Staples, Tobias Music, Underwood-Dills, Village Framer, Walnut Cove Farms, West Carolina Water Treatment
  - Non-Profits: Buy Haywood, Haywood County Council of Community Clubs, Folkmoot, Haywood Advancement Foundation, Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society, Haywood Waterways Association, Mountain Heritage Center at WCU, Museum of NC Handicrafts in Shelton House, NC Society of Historians, Preservation NC, WNC Communities, WNC Historical Association at Smith-McDowell House
  - Governmental Agencies: NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, NC Department of Transportation,

### 35. Narrative

Please provide a narrative describing one collaboration that had a powerful impact on your community's well-being or resilience. Please answer the who, what, where, when, why, and how for this collaboration. This should be a different initiative from what was described in the narrative for Community Programs & Civic Engagement. (Limit: 500 words)

**COLOR CODE: INCOME – EXPENSES – VOLUNTEERS/HOURS – PARTNERS**

During COVID, BRCO held 1 picnic meeting with members/visitors (1 was cancelled; 4 were business only ZOOM meetings). Our major fundraiser, the race, was essentially cancelled. BRCO stopped its planned group activities except for food pantry, pantry/rural preservation coupon program, and benevolence (fuel/utilities) outreach. Our Food Pantry (FP), Rural Preservation (RP), and Benevolence Committees responded to community food and utilities insecurities.

The pantry changed its approach of having participants shop inside the facility. FP volunteers packed dozens of boxes with staples, carried them to the newly erected tent, wore masks, and delivered boxes to the endless number of cars that packed our parking lot and filled the adjacent highway. The new procedure increased volunteer workload immensely. We serviced 3 times the number of people/families than pre-COVID (increased from 16 to 47 families).

Our collaboration with MANNA was invaluable because volunteers who traveled to bring back food items were packing approximately 1,000 pounds per weekly trip, sometimes requiring 2 vehicles. (8 Volunteers) Without MANNA's centralized supply of food, the task of providing food for a hungry community would have been untenable. Our collaboration with WNC Communities with its Farmers to Families Food Box Program that lasted weekly for 2 months enabled us to address food insecurity needs of 47 families (approximately 200 people) with prepared, canned, fresh, and cooled food (5 volunteers). We purchased meat from House of Raeford and received tomatoes from the Gleaners. FP also purchased pet food and hired a person for facility clean-up. Our budget for the food program outpaced budgeted income. Three churches (Crestview, Encouraging Word, and Riverside) as well as 8 individuals ensured that we would have much of the funding necessary to purchase food (18 volunteers, 2,003 Hours, 16 Partners).

Support from 3 businesses, Farm Bureau, Haywood EMC, and Hometown Hardware (2 Volunteers, 6 Hours) enabled RP to expand our farm coupon program that allowed pantry participants to purchase fresh produce from local farms (2 Volunteers; 60 hours). Farms (Chambers, Leatherwood, Ten Acre) benefitted because customers often purchased more than the coupon amount. (2 Volunteers, 6 Partners).

Benevolence needs for fuel/utilities assistance poured in during the colder months. BRCO affiliated with Duke Power, Haywood EMC, McElroy Oil, and 1 donor to assist 6 families so that they were able to stay warm and retain electrical service. (2 Volunteers, 12 hours, 4 Partners)

**FOOD EXPENSES**

MANNA: \$2,744  
Coupon Program: \$2,675  
House of Raeford: \$105  
Pet Food: \$240  
Facility Clean-up: \$225  
TOTAL: \$5,989

**FOOD INCOME**

Businesses: \$1,500  
Churches: \$2,046  
Individuals: \$1,060  
TOTAL: \$4,606

**FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALS SERVED: 47/200**

**BENEVOLENCE EXPENSES**

TOTAL: Businesses: \$1,415

**BENEVOLENCE INCOME**

TOTAL: Individual: \$500

**FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALS SERVED: 6**

**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$7,404**

**TOTAL INCOME: \$5,106**

**TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS:2081**

**TOTAL PARTNERS: 26**

**TOTAL FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALS SERVED: 47/206**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT & FUTURE PLANS**

WNC Communities' goal is to help you build your club's capacity to deliver services and programs that help your community to thrive, and self-assessment is a valuable tool that helps all of our organizations improve and better serve our communities. This is vital information for us to understand your challenges and aspirations and how we can best assist you in the coming year. We will use this information to inform what training, coaching, and planning to offer to our communities, so please be candid. A few examples of areas you could include in your self-assessment as either strengths or weaknesses are: the board's level of organization or effective communication, fundraising or grant writing ability, how focused and efficient your meetings are, your effectiveness at volunteer engagement or retention, recurring issues with building maintenance, etc.

36. What are your community club's current strengths and weaknesses, and what are your goals for self-improvement over the next year? (Limit: 500 words)
37. How will you invest the award funds, which will most likely be \$500? (Limit: 350 words)

### **Bethel Rural Community Organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, & Goals**

#### **Strengths**

- **Encompassing Vision: Preserving Yesterday – Helping Today – Planning for Tomorrow**
- **Strategic Mission Statement: Coordinate local and regional resources to perform programs and projects that enhance the quality of rural life in Bethel Community**
- **Stunning Logo**
- **Excellent Bylaws that anticipate issues that arise in operating the organization**
- **Strong leadership of the board/officers - lead the organization in a professional, thoughtful manner**
- **Availability of talent within leadership/membership to execute a variety of projects**
- **Board is continually self-assessing in order to evaluate areas for improvement**
- **Workable organizational structure that allows committees with varied interests and agendas to carry out BRCO's work with adequate, but not overpowering and over controlling, input from the board and officers**
- **Meetings are well organized with a dinner. Engage entertaining speakers followed by business meeting – no more than 1 ½ hours total**
- **Excellent communication to organization relayed through the secretary via email to the group – gets results**
- **Attend festivals/present program to promote BRCO**
- **Utilize print media frequently to allow the community and county to be aware of our projects, programs, and accomplishments – an approach that has enabled us to gain membership and have a favorable reputation in the county, region, and state**
- **Have 2 emails (1 organizational; 1 for the race) , Facebook, 2 websites (1 organizational; 1 for the race), and publish a bi-monthly newsletter so that BRCO has a wide presence**
- **Financial thoughtfulness and planning via board decisions that secure BRCO's ability to function currently and into the future**
- **Manages to find money and resources**
- **The rock of the community - from food assistance to educational scholarship/awards to life education information to historic preservation and rural conservation**

#### **Weaknesses**

- **Difficulty in attracting younger membership into the organization**
- **Difficulty in broadening the base of those who are willing to serve in work or leadership capacities**
- **Some members are stretched to serve in a number of capacities**
- **Committees are frequently stretched to do the necessities so that there is no capability for taking on new projects that would benefit the organization and the community.**

- Have not achieved some of the governance goals outlined in the WNC Communities application such as long-term strategic planning
- Lacking in onsite educational programs that serve students and the community (tutoring, literacy, diversity, job skills, financial skills)
- Lack of development of programs that would enable our community center to have greater use by non-members
- Have not invested in broadband outreach to the community from our facility

## Goals

- Review Bylaws biannually
- Complete the Policies and Procedures Manual to serve as an educational tool for new leaders and to provide guidance for the board, officers, and committee chairs
- Have each committee complete an introspective analysis to determine means and methods for accomplishing further outreach regarding programs, community needs, and organizational enhancement
- Explore methods for enticing younger members at some level of participation
- Examine approaches for retaining current membership while instituting outreach mechanisms for attracting new members
- Study tactics for inducing reluctant members to take on leadership roles
- Implement targeted fundraising efforts via grant writing
- Broaden outreach regarding community needs

## Investment of Award Funds

Like most community organizations during COVID, our organization lost anticipated revenue. Our largest fundraiser, the 5K/Half Marathon Race that typically brings in \$15,000, brought in only \$124 when the race was changed to a virtual event. Our board/membership had to change the Bylaws to allow us to diminish expenditures from the amount voted on by the board/membership pre-COVID. So, any extra funding we can secure is needed and appreciated.

The most pressing needs occurred with a dramatic increase in funding required for the food pantry and benevolence programs. Pre-COVID budgeted amounts did not begin to meet the urgent need. Thus, the Food Pantry and Benevolence Committees worked hard to solicit income to cover the deficiency. The Rural Preservation Committee's coupon program allowing fresh produce from local farms and food stands to be used by pantry participants almost matched expenditures of the MANNA program that brings in shelf-stable items. In addition, our Benevolence outreach to assist several families with utilities/fuel needs also exceeded our budget. But food is a more pressing issue even than utilities. Thus, our anticipated \$500 gift from WNC Communities will probably go to the coupon program that assists local farmers as well as pantry participants. BRCO, with this project is supporting local rural businesses, thereby ensuring job security, as well as feeding quality fresh food to community members in need.

While the outlook is hopeful that the health environment will improve, recent events indicate that the pandemic, with its extra burden placed on food security and income capability, will require continuing

vigilance by our community organization whose programs create better living conditions for community citizens while also supporting local businesses. While we value our Beautification, Education, Historic and Rural Preservation agendas and will continue to direct our attention and resources to maintaining our facility/grounds, ensuring educational opportunities and recognition for local students, conducting research and documentation of our local history, and moving forward with environmental sustainability and stewardship projects, we realize that our most pressing issue is taking Like most community organizations during COVID, our organization lost anticipated revenue. Our largest fundraiser, the 5K/Half Marathon Race that typically brings in \$15,000, brought in only \$124 when the race was changed to a virtual event. Our board/membership had to change the Bylaws to allow us to diminish expenditures from the amount voted on by the board/membership pre-COVID. So, any extra funding we can secure is needed and appreciated.

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While the outlook is hopeful that the health environment will improve, recent events indicate that the pandemic, with its extra burden placed on food security and income capability, will require continuing vigilance by our community organization whose programs create better living conditions for community citizens while also supporting local businesses. While we value our Beautification, Education, Historic and Rural Preservation agendas and will continue to direct our attention and resources to maintaining our facility/grounds, ensuring educational opportunities and recognition for local students, conducting research and documentation of our local history, and moving forward with environmental sustainability and stewardship projects, we realize that our most pressing issue is taking care of the immediate survival needs of people in our community. care of the immediate survival needs

An important BRCO initiative is preservation of our collective memory. BRCO's Historic Preservation (HP) programs access historical knowledge, conduct research, document, and create a sense of belonging and pride in our community. Art prints, books, CDs, and DVDs produced by these efforts bring in continual funding. Prints decorate the community center. Ongoing collecting, researching, and documenting allows us to connect with dozens of people, businesses, governmental agencies, and non-profits.

ART

- HP Committee was honored (among hundreds of submittals) as one of 40 to receive an NC Society of Historians Award for our 24 art print collection. Art project began in 2012 and is an ongoing collection of historic pieces and local artist commissioned paintings featuring Bethel's historic sites.

- One of five nominees to receive the Lighthouse Award for outstanding accomplishment in documenting NC history.

- ZOOM awards meeting educated 50 + historians about BRCO's project.

- Worked with 6 artists (10 paintings), 12 individuals/families who donated 13 art pieces, Haywood County History Museum, Museum of NC Handicrafts, NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, and WCU's Mountain Heritage Center/Archives concerning documentation.

- Art print topics: bridge, churches, farms, houses, mill, sawmill map, store, schools, post office/depot, patent drawing, historic tree, and a passenger pigeon - encapsulating numerous aspects of Bethel history.

- Adding two paintings this year.

#### DVD FILMING

- Worked this year with 2 families, 1 church, 1 community club to film footage of Bethel's historic school locations (upcoming Historic Schools of Bethel DVD).

- Filming of 4 segments (6 individuals and 1 historic school) for this DVD began in 2017

- Received 3 previous NC Society of Historians Awards for 3 DVDs as well as 1 for 6 books

- Produced 2 CDs

#### HISTORIC MARKERS

- Working with NCDOT to place a marker at NC's oldest metal truss bridge

- Marker will be the 6th to decorate Bethel's landscape and educate passersby about our history.

#### HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD

- Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation recognized 2 individuals who restored a historic church (COVID cancelled program).

- Recognized 7 previous winners since 2014

#### BETHEL WRITERS

- Developed a website roster of 91 writers/media contributors from Bethel or affiliated with Bethel or BRCO

- Listing increased by 19 in 2021.

#### RESEARCH TOPICS

- Began researching/visiting/documenting 23 historic cemeteries in Bethel, including 2 slave cemeteries
- Wrote a history of Bethel Cannery
- Completed write-up of 14 historic post offices in Bethel
- Researched information about several Bethel families
- Continue adding to our extensive “file” library about Bethel history

Since HP began producing art, books, CDs, DVDs, and historic markers, we have linked with hundreds of people who connected because they are interested in our topics. We have salvaged memories and copious amounts of data that would have been lost. Our organization has benefitted because sales allow us to continue focusing on history. We have received statewide recognition (6 awards), and local media attention has made our accomplishments known and respected. Ongoing HP preservation enables remembrance of our history, giving us a sense of identity that inspires a collective consciousness.

## SPECIAL AWARDS

### **WNC Communities Impact Award (Optional)**

Describe an initiative your community club led this past year that had a significant, measurable impact on your community or a group within your community getting to a new level of well-being. A few examples would be helping people who had depended on the food pantry to grow their own gardens and become able to provide their own food or advocating and coordinating to get broadband for your community, or helping people gain skills and get employed, or helping entrepreneurs start a business and get to their next level. This should be a project that empowers others that your club originated, organized, and staffed with volunteers. Include how you measured the impact on people and share the outcomes, plus any future plans. This should be a different initiative than what you entered anywhere else in a narrative on your application. Please attach up to 2 high quality photos. (Limit: 500 words)

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- One of five nominees to receive the Lighthouse Award for outstanding accomplishment in documenting NC history.



- ZOOM awards meeting allowed our project to resonate with 50 + historians.
- Worked with 6 artists (10 paintings), 12 individuals/families who donated 13 art pieces, Haywood County History Museum, Museum of NC Handicrafts, NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, and WCU's Mountain Heritage Center/Department of Archives concerning documentation.
- Prints include a bridge, churches, farms, houses, mill, store, schools, post office/depot, sawmill map, patent drawing, historic tree, and a passenger pigeon - encapsulating numerous aspects of Bethel history.
- Will add two paintings this year.

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- Filming of 4 previous segments (6 individuals and 1 historic school) for this DVD began in 2017
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