



Toe River Valley Watch works for the health of community

The Toe River Valley Watch was formed in 2006. Since our formation we have strived to work with local, regional, state and national partners for the sake of our region's precious waterways and for the future of the communities that depend on them. Through these partnerships we have been able to complete projects to help preserve the rich rural heritage of our mountain home.

In the spring of 2007 the old Kona train trestle was vandalized and burned, causing it to collapse into the North Toe River. TRVW was instrumental in getting the train trestle removed from the river, which had to be cut up and then removed piece by



**Starli
McDowell**

**Toe River
Valley Watch**

piece by a helicopter due to its remote location.

TRVW has proven commitment to our local farmers. We have partnered with the Mitchell and Yancey Soil and Water Conservation Districts to enhance water quality within farmland by providing funds as a match for the voluntary Agriculture Cost Share/EQIP program. These programs provide technical assistance and financial assistance to help farmers fence livestock out of creeks that run through

our county, and provide livestock alternate watering sources. Livestock are known to impact streamside plants through trampling, which in turn causes banks to erode and results in the loss of farmland and impacts to stream habitat. These programs help to re-establish streamside vegetation, which prevents land loss and helps to shade streams. Trout and other native aquatic species depend on our cool, clear water streams for survival.

Another important project we completed with help from our partners was the removal of the Spruce Pine dam. By removing this dilapidated concrete structure we opened up the river for a safer passage through

this beautiful section to boaters, anglers and other recreational users. This also allowed passage upstream for fish. This dam removal also fulfilled a desire of the Peterson family and the community to remove the dangerous structure from the river, which was the site of the tragic, accidental drowning death of attorney John Peterson in the 1980s.

With funding from the Fish America Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we reconstructed the bank at Riverside Park in Spruce Pine, which had been washed away by the high water events of the past several years. We planted native grasses, shrubs and trees to hold

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The 6th annual Toes in the Toe River Festival

brought all the 5th graders in both Mitchell and Yancey Counties to the river for a fun and educational environmental outdoor class experience. The children played and learned alongside volunteers who shared their diverse skills and love for children and the environment in order help the kids better understand and appreciate the bounty of natural resources in these mountains we call home. Stations included Art, Watershed Health, Fantastic Fish, Waterbug Safari, Wonderful Life of Bees and more.



TOE TALK

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the new bank in place; built two attractive stone access stairways down to the river; and constructed a rain garden to catch, clean and slowly release some of the storm water. Storm water was contributing to the bank failure beneath the popular walking path at Riverside Park, and also was impacting water quality in the river.

We worked with partners to construct a kiosk at Riverside Park that provides information to visitors about the Toe River Canoe Trail and aquatic animals that rely on the North Toe River and its tributaries. At the Yancey County Recreational Park we constructed walking trails along the Cane River. We will contin-

ue to enhance and improve these two very extraordinary river parks to benefit our community.

We are very proud of the many projects we have been able to accomplish, and of the many partnerships we have built over the years! We are excited to announce our next big project made possible by grants from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the N.C. Division of Water Resources, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These funds will be used for a stream restoration project along Grassy Creek, behind the Spruce Pine Shopping Center. This initial grant is helping to lay the foundation for the second phase of the project, which will be a greenway for walking, running, biking and

angler access to Grassy Creek.

We continue to grow with the help of our partners and volunteers. We look forward to a great future and many more projects to benefit the Toe and Cane River watersheds, the community, and local residents.

Starli McDowell is president of Toe River Valley Watch.



Become a Member of Toe River Valley Watch.

Your views, ideas and energy will play a key role in ensuring a healthy future for Mitchell and Yancey Counties.

Send your membership donation to:

Toe River Valley Watch * P.O. Box 252 * Penland NC * 28765
18 years of age or younger: \$10.00 minimum. Over 18: \$25.00 minimum.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

_____ Check if you would like to volunteer your time to help us accomplish our goals.

Your membership at any level is greatly appreciated!

Here is my tax-deductible check to support TRVW:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$ _____