

LANDCARE MINUTES
 Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9 AM
Montreat Town Hall

Call to Order
Moment of Silence
Call for Quorum

Entity	Name	Vote	Pres
MLC Chair	George Sawyer		X
MLC Vice Chair, NWF Comm. Wildlife	Bill Neely		X
MLC Treasurer, Town Representative	Jean Norris		X
MLC Secretary, Town Representative	Kathy Putnam		X
MLC Town Commissioner	Jane Alexander		
Cottagers Wilderness & Open Space	Beth Fountain		
Montreat College	Josh Holbrook		
Montreat Conference Center (MCC/MRA)	Tracy Bailey		X
Montreat Conference Center (MCC/MRA)	Martha Todd Sloan		X
MCC/MRA -Wilderness Committee	Jason Nanz		X
MPC(USA) Earth Ministry Team	Hal Demerest		X
Quorum: $11/2 + 1 = 6.5 = 7$ voting members	TOTAL		

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of August Minutes: Putnam move; Norris second; all approved.

Treasurer’s Report: Little has changed in the budget, although we had another donation. Recent expenses include cost of reprinting Jim’s cards, \$2,400 for a new survey for Flat Creek, and \$180 for website work. We are about to begin review of the website. In theory, Flat Creek is 17% short of funds for construction. Project shouldn’t cost as much as originally thought because: 1) there may be matching help from the town; 2) less material will be needed for the path due to storm-driven changes to the creek, and; 3) the town has determined that the bridge does not have to support vehicle traffic.

-----Public Comments-----

Ed Kramer, Tree Board Chair: He is going to suggest to Montreat Commissioners Mason Blake and Jane Alexander that the Tree Board be incorporated into Landcare. There are five at large members. They have been busy this year – three to five homeowners asked for help removing debris from their property. They have a working relationship with the Swannanoa Valley Tree Alliance and Treasured Tree program. This spring they raised \$2,000 and treated over 125 hemlocks in the town ROW. The board has been working with the Hemlock Restoration Initiative and will be working with residents to facilitate treatment of trees on private property. They are planning for an Arbor Day celebration which will be held at post office. They are going

to be planting chestnuts in memory of Brad Hestir. There is a community garden in Montreat on town ROW near the gate and the community could consider reinstating it.

Ashley Manson Morat, Tree Board member: Ashley discussed what she's been doing with others to treat hemlocks around Montreat. She indicated that information on the website needs to be updated. Bill Neely asked how much would it be to adopt a tree on Flat Creek for treatment. Ashley said right now they're focused on identification of trees needing treatment. They already have funds for 15. Tracy Bailey asked how the beetles are doing. Ashley said the college is doing counts and the beetles are doing great, but not enough to sustain the valley.

Entity Reports

- Town of Montreat: no report
- MRA: Martha said starting this week replanting will begin around the gate. A master plan is being created to replace existing plants with natives. She said the MRA is making progress on bridges in wilderness. Greybaard bridge footings are almost done. Later this month and into October work will be done on trails. Jason said once we can reopen, we'll do a public hike up to Walkers Knob and a fundraising dinner.
- Montreat College: George says he asked Josh for another person from the college to be on the board. Bill Neely asked if a student could be a member. Jean Norris says the bylaws imply that the representative is appointed by the college. Ashley suggested Abigail Leahy.
- Cottagers Wilderness and Open Space: No report.
- Earth Ministry: No report.

Team Reports

- Flat Creek Crossing: April Cater and Jean Norris met with the bridge designer and should have something soon. April has the Special Use Permit ready for approval. They're exploring if the town is willing to do some site work at the beginning of the project. The Pigeon River Fund coordinator is connecting us with a trail surveyor who uses a wheelchair. Adam Combs, a Montreat student, will be a conference speaker at the Outdoor Economy Conference in Cherokee. Sept. 15.
- Community Wildlife Habitat: We have three new registrants and need one more to certify this year.
- Native Plant Sale: The subcommittee suggests April 11, 2026 for the event. That will work with MRA's schedule and it will be before most other entities in the area begin their spring activities. Members are working on a new name for the re-imagined event and working to recruit more volunteers.
- Firewise: No report.
- Bearwise: No report. George said Arrington Cox is concerned about losing our Bearwise certification. Jason said there needs to be a plan of action. George also says there needs to be neighborhood bear watchers.
- Hemlock Restoration: No report
- Children and Outdoors, Kids in Parks, and Eco-Explore: George replenished the brochure kiosk. The initiator was Montreat College and they have the backpacks. He said if this program becomes popular again, perhaps the college will take it. Brochures are expensive. This is program run through National Park Service and Montreat is the only non-park entity that has been approved for this program. Bill Neely suggested tracking

the number of brochures that are picked up. Jason Nanz has observed that visitors just start taking brochures thinking they're getting Montreat information. Tracy wonders if there is a log at the library. Thought was that there would be a check-out of backpacks at the library.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Next meeting: October 1, 2025

Adjourn: Jason moved; Kathy 2nd Meeting ended at 9:49a.