

LANDCARE MEETING MINUTES
 Wednesday, February 4, 2026 9 AM
Montreat Town Hall

Call to Order
Moment of Silence
Oath Administration for Jean Norris and Kathy Putnam
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		X
Cottagers Wilderness & Open Space	Beth Fountain		X
Montreat College	Josh Holbrook		X
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		
Quorum: $11/2 + 1 = 6.5 = 7$ voting members	TOTAL		10

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of January Minutes (Not needed due to lack of quorum in January)

Treasurer’s Report: Jean Norris – We received \$1,400 in donations in December. Landcare’s balance is currently \$131,558, including a little over \$34,000 from the Pigeon River Fund for Flat Creek Crossing. About \$6,600 is not connected to FCC. We must also build the budget for the next fiscal year.

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

Bill Roberts of 151 Woodland Road (828-674-7640) addressed the committee regarding water runoff and erosion since Helene. He’s been having a problem in his backyard since Helene with water coming down into his yard, flowing across the street, and into his neighbor’s property. He said that in 1983, MRA transferred the Montreat roads to the town. It wasn’t filed with the county because technology at the time didn’t allow it. The document is an old plat with colored markers indicating the streets. Some streets have 20-ft setbacks, others have 25-ft setbacks. He backs up to Virginia. He indicates his water runoff problem is due to all the trees downed in Helene. He’s wondering if native grasses or other plants could be installed in town right of way/greenspace areas to address runoff.

Bill Neely said when he bought his lot, there was some portion that was considered town greenspace. There must be a map for this because the greenspace donation from MRA to town was separate from the roads transfer.

George Sawyer said he has the same issue. He suggested Roberts talk with Public Works Director Barry Creasmann about what needs to be done.

Jean Norris added that a recent study of the watershed indicated there was a limited number of things we can do.

Beth Fountain asked for clarification for what Roberts wanted: you want Landcare to ID the greenspace areas and educate the property owners what they can do and perhaps do a planting party? If we were to do this, how would you ID the first 10 spaces? It would need to be grassroots with lots of enthusiasm. What are you thinking?

Roberts said Barry knows where these spots are. “The area near my property is one of the larger greenspace areas. Let’s promote it and get someone knowledgeable so they can tell us the real benefits of this.”

George Sawyer asked Roberts to get us the information on the greenspace areas as it sounds like there is interest in this.

Jason Nanz requested that someone from the town bring the greenspace map to the next meeting so we know what we’re looking at.

Josh Holbrook offered that he’s not convinced we could make a significant change in water runoff because we’re in a funnel here, unless you’re willing to spend a lot of money. On a case-by-case basis, you might be able to make a difference. Rain gardens are good for light rain catchment, but not flood control.

Entity Reports

- Town of Montreat: Jane Alexander – Public Works is the star again. They’ve been working hard on the roads following our recent bad weather. I’ll get the greenspace map.
- MRA: Jason Nanz – MRA is about to start rebuild of bridge between Harry Bryan and Graybeard trails. Hopefully it will start this spring and be done by summer. We’re in middle of summer staff hiring process.
- Montreat College: Josh Holbrook – I have a student in beginning stages of brook trout restoration above Lake Susan. Jacob Rash is the coldwater fish biologist we’re working with. He’ll do comprehensive snorkel survey in Flat Creek on fish population. We’ve done some trapping and there’s not much there.
- Cottagers Wilderness and Open Space: No report
- Earth Ministry: No report

Team Reports

- Flat Creek Crossing: Feb. 9 is scheduled work for carving out the path. We submitted a grant proposal to NC Parks and Recreation; it's a 1-1 match funded through Helene funds. Our grant asked for \$614,000. This would rebuild the bank on Memorial Garden side, rebuild bank on the other side with a fence that will screen the maintenance yard. Because the footbridge is down, hikers are going through the maintenance yard. Also need to clean and prepare the area for a bridge. Work upstream indicates that this work will cost as much as the grant request. Bill Neely asked to be sure that access to Rainbow Trail is maintained. Jean indicated the trail access would be there. Where grant leaves off, we want to put in a steel beam support, wood superstructure that's high enough for higher water. There is a donor in town who may be willing to fund it.
- Community Wildlife Habitat: Bill Neely – He is looking for five more yards to certify this year.
- Landcare Festival: Kathy Putnam – We're hoping that all Landcare Committee organizations will have tables at the festival to educate the public. This is April 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We have text for the festival webpage and Anne Seaman is designing the poster. We have four vendors so far and three Montreat artists. The MRA will print the posters and we'll get them to area businesses, as well as promotion through various organization communications.
- Firewise: Nancy Midgette – Last month Montreat received its recognition as a Firewise community for the sixth consecutive year. On February 11, a state forest ranger will be in Montreat for the evaluation that Firewise conducts every five years. He will visit properties that I have selected and received permission to be on and will also drive around town, noting challenging places for emergency equipment. I will be with him for his entire visit. His evaluation is for informational purposes only and will not be disruptive in any way. Beth Fountain suggested that if Bill Roberts' idea for greenspace planting is far enough along, perhaps he could have a table to educate the community and recruit volunteers for plantings.
- Bearwise: George Sawyer mentioned that at the last town council meeting, Commissioner Mason Blake said he is investigating the cost of printing more copies of a bear book that is in the Montreat bookstore.
- Hemlock Restoration: No report
- Children and Outdoors, Kids in Parks, and Eco-Explore: No report

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- Review of Committee member term expirations. The only members with term limits are town representatives.

Next meeting: March 4, 2026

Adjourn