



# Land-of-Sky Regional Council

Buncombe • Henderson • Madison • Transylvania Counties

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Bill Eaker, Land-of-Sky Regional Council, 828-734-7434 (cell) or 251-6622 (w)

### **LAND-OF-SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL PRESENTS “FRIENDS OF THE RIVER” AWARDS**

The Land-of-Sky Regional Council presented “Friends of the River” Awards during the 36th Annual “Friends of the River” Dinner in Asheville. These awards recognize individuals, private organizations, civic groups, and/or public agencies in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties who have made significant contributions toward the enhancement or restoration of the French Broad River as a cultural, economic, natural, or recreational resource.

The 2013 award winners are:

**Susan Roderick** – for her work over three decades to beautify the community and clean up and protect waterways as Executive Director of Asheville GreenWorks (formerly Quality Forward).

**Jim and Barbara Volk** – for their long time involvement in the French Broad River Foundation and RiverLink and Barbara’s environmental leadership on the Hendersonville City Council.

**Blue Heron Whitewater** – for encouraging their customers to be good stewards of the River and donating proceeds from their river rafting trips to non-profit causes including programs to protect the French Broad River.

**Sierra Nevada, New Belgium, Oskar Blues and the Asheville Brewers Alliance** – for being collectively and individually the best advocates for clean water and the very best example of the economic impact that protection of our natural resources - water in particular- can bring to the region.

**William M. Ives** - presented in memory of former Transylvania County Commissioner and State Representative William M. Ives for his efforts to create river cleanup and restoration programs in Transylvania County and at the Land of Sky Regional Council in the 1970s.

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For information on French Broad River improvement programs, contact Bill Eaker at the Land-of-Sky Regional Council at 251-6622.

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Contact [annie@landofsky.org](mailto:annie@landofsky.org) for photos of award winners.

Full text of the Awards are attached.



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## **“FRIEND OF THE RIVER” AWARDS**

**Fletcher Councilman Bob Davy and Brevard Councilman Mac Morrow**

### **Councilman Davy:**

"The Friend of the River Awards are presented annually by the Land-of-Sky Regional Council to persons, private organizations, industries, civic groups, and public agencies who have made a significant contribution toward the restoration and enhancement of the French Broad River as a recreational, economic, and cultural resource for the residents of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties. Contributions that may be recognized are those which:

1. Create a community awareness of the river;
2. Provide legislative, technical, or funding support for river improvement projects;
3. Stimulate or use citizen volunteers for river improvement; and
4. Further an understanding of the river as a natural resource."

"A few of the previous recipients include Curt Crowhurst, Jean Webb, Metropolitan Sewerage District, Quality Forward, Jere ("Jerry") Brittain, Bob Shepherd, Dr. Richard Maas, The NC Clean Water Mgt Trust Fund, Karen Cragolin, Black Mountain Greenway Commission, John Humphrey, Bob Watts, Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, Russell Blevins, Buncombe Co. Bd. of Commissioners, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, David Gantt, Luther Smith, Forrest Westall and the Transylvania Water Resources Board."

"In addition to tonight's awards, we are also presenting each winner a copy of The French Broad by our well-known native author, the late Mrs. Wilma Dykeman Stokely, and signed by her son Jim who is with us tonight with his wife Anne."

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And, now with Mac's assistance, we'd like to present this year's awards."

## Councilman DAVY

"Our first 'Friend of the River' Award tonight is presented to Susan Roderick of Asheville.

Susan has become synonymous with trees and lovely urban flowers. Even her license plate says I love trees. She has also been a warrior against litter. Making Asheville litter free and flower abundant with blooming Bartlett pear trees everywhere is Susan's legacy to the city of Asheville.

She served as Executive Director of Quality Forward, Buncombe County's Keep America Beautiful Affiliate, (now called Asheville GreenWorks) for decades and helped to establish several river improvement initiatives. For example she helped clean up illegal dump sites along our streams. She coordinated the Great Asheville Buncombe Cleanup, the Annual River Cleanup effort on the French Broad River and a May Clean Streams Day event that focused on the tributaries. Tons of debris including thousands of tires have been removed from our waterways thanks to Susan and thousands of her volunteers. No less than 500 trees are planted each year to promote better drainage, water quality and a cooler/greener environment. "Her organization also repaired damaged streambanks through their riparian zone projects. Asheville GreenWorks' moto is "Get Dirty for a Great Cause!" Susan got down and dirty often and made our waterways and community much more beautiful and enjoyable for all.

For her efforts over three decades we are thrilled to recognize her as a Friend of the River."

Congratulations! Please come forward."

(Susan comes to the podium to accept award and book, have photo taken, makes remarks and takes a seat.)

## Councilman Davy:

"Our second 'Friend of the River' Award tonight is presented to Jim and Barbara Volk of

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Hendersonville.

Both Dr. Jim Volk and Hendersonville Mayor Barbara Volk have been long time supporters of the environment and river improvement initiatives.

Former Henderson County Commissioner Renee Kumor who has known them for decades had this to say about them: “Jim and Barbara - they walk the walk regarding their beliefs. They have been river supporters since they arrived in the region. During her League of Women Voters years and time as a member of Junior Women, Barbara has always carried on in support of environmental issues. They continue through their children and grandchildren to teach respect for all around the world around them.”

Karen Cragolin of Riverlink said, “Jim was the Chairman of the French Broad River Foundation in the 80s and chaired the Riverlink Board more recently. Both of them are really engaged and articulate on issues of growth and the future. Both are long time supporters of Riverlink and other environmental causes.”

The Volks are also members of Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy that works to preserve special places including riparian areas along our rivers and streams. Jim was an early member of the board of directors.

Barbara has provided leadership on Hendersonville City Council in support of many environmental and river improvement initiatives including:

- The recent decision by Hendersonville to provide substantial funding and support to the Mills River Partnership that is working to protect this valuable drinking water source;
- Support for the Mud Creek Watershed Restoration Project;
- Creation of a City Green Challenge Task Force and Environmental Advisory Board;
- Serving on the Mountain Resources Commission; and
- Support of Rails to Trails and avid supporter of Oklawaha Greenway development and expansion.
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Former County Commissioner and current State Representative Chuck McGrady said:

“Barbara has always been a supporter of progressive sorts of things---the Hendersonville greenways, land use planning, working together on sewer issues, working cooperatively with the county on water and land use issues.”

So when you see Jim and Barbara driving down the road in their plug in electric Chevy Volt wave and thank them for being great stewards of the environment and dedicated Friends of the River.”

“Jim and Barbara please come forward.”

(Jim and Barbara come to the podium to accept award and book, have photo taken, **make remarks** and take a seat.)

(Mac Morrow and Councilman Davy **reverse roles**)

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## Councilman Morrow:

"Our third Friend of the River' Award tonight is presented to

The Asheville Brewers Alliance and New Belgium, Sierra Nevada & Oskar Blues Breweries.

The Land of Sky Regional Council is proud to honor the Asheville Brewers Alliance, New Belgium Brewing, Sierra Nevada and Oskar Blues for making WNC and the French Broad River watershed a destination for craft beer. Asheville Brewers Alliance members include:

- Asheville Brewing Company
- Bruisin' Ales
- Brews Cruise
- French Broad Brewing Company

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- Green Man Brewing Company
- Highland Brewing Company
- Lexington Avenue Brewery
- Oyster House Brewing
- Wedge Brewing Company
- Southern Appalachian Brewery
- Catawba Valley Brewing Company
- Heinzelmännchen Brewing Company
- Nantahala Brewing Company
- Pisgah Brewing Company
- MALT, and the
- Thirsty Monk

The ABA established Asheville as "Beer City USA" through their creativity, entrepreneurship, hard work, sophisticated brewing and dedication to excellence of product. The reputation and products of the greater Asheville brewing community were instrumental in gaining this national reputation and recognition for our region. Their combined efforts and impact was also instrumental in attracting Sierra Nevada (second-largest craft brewer in the nation) and New Belgium Brewing (third-largest) and Oscar Blues to our region. Our local brewers welcomed and partner where possible with these larger companies in an effort to make the beer scene even bigger and better for everyone. Since over 90% of their product is water, our brewing industry partners are collectively and individually the best advocates for clean water and the very best example of the economic impact that protection of our natural resources -- water in particular -- can bring to our region.

Both Sierra Nevada and New Belgium are building their east coast breweries on property that borders the French Broad River. These East Coast breweries are being built with a sustainable and mindful approach and maintain the integrity of the property and beauty of the natural landscape. All the breweries have supported numerous community and fundraising events through donations of cash and of course that great craft beer (including tonight's event!).

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For being strong advocates for clean water, for their community involvement and their dedication to the sustainability of our region's natural resources, we are proud to recognize Sierra Nevada, New Belgium, Oskar Blues and the Asheville Brewers Alliance as valuable Friends of the River."

"Representing the Asheville Brewers Alliance is President John Lyda and Catawba Valley Brewing Company's Billy Pyatt, representing New Belgium is Tyler Foos, and representing Sierra Nevada is Cheri Chastain. Oscar Blues representative Anne-Fitten Glenn had a conflict and sends her thanks."

"Folks please come forward."

(Brewery representatives come to the podium to accept award and book, have photos taken, **make remarks** and take a seat.)

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## Mac Morrow:

"Our fourth 'Friend of the River' Award tonight is presented to **Blue Heron Whitewater of Madison County**.

Blue Heron Whitewater was established 20 years ago by long time river lovers and veteran paddlers Fritz Johnson and Sandy Melton. Their offices speak to their concern about the environment and culture of WNC. The property they bought to house their operations had two old bars which were recycled into their new offices and up fitted with solar power. The grounds at Blue Heron incorporate nature in all its variety and feature a number of art installations by both family and friends. Each month May thru September the staff at Blue Heron volunteers their time and conducts a Sunday whitewater trip.

100% of the proceeds from these excursions are donated to non-profit organizations that make a difference in Madison County and throughout the watershed by improving some aspect of life that impacts all the folks throughout the community. Recipients include from arts organizations to affordable housing non-profits and RiverLink.

The guides at Blue Heron encourage their customers to be good stewards of our waterways and

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the environment. Over the years both Sandy and Fritz have been supportive of many of the Land of Sky Regional Council's river programs including donating their time for the Mayors Cup Raft Race.

When not paddling the owners can be found tending their organic gardens and llamas. Through their everyday life and long time activities Blue Heron Whitewater is a true Friend of the River"

"Sandy Melton and Fritz Johnson , please come forward."

(Sandy Melton and Fritz Johnson come to the podium to accept award and book, have photo taken, make remarks and take a seat.)

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## Mac Morrow:

"Our fifth and final "Friend of the River" Award is presented in memory of former Transylvania County Commissioner and State Representative William M Ives.

I had known Bill Ives for as long as I can remember. as Keystone camp owner, parish and community leader.. So when he asked me to take over the river clean up project in 1976, I didn't hesitate. The French Broad River which we celebrate tonight. brought us together in stewardship and furthered our mutual appreciation for this national treasure.. and. it is from that experience. my participation in tonight's presentation is very meaningful.

As I now serve as a Councilman from Brevard, I am sure he would be proud our current effort to join the million of people who now drink from the French Broad River.. and would probably acclaim. "well.., it is about time!"

If anyone understood the importance of this renewable treasure to his community and region. it was Bill. He was elected in 1972 to the Transylvania Board of Commissioners following a successful campaign to save the river valley from TVA impoundments. He served as Chairman until 1976 and again form 1980-1984. He led the establishment of the Water Resources Board

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who oversaw the clean up effort... Bill's team created the county recreation department and the hiring of the first professional County Manager. He knew his county well. named for it's natural beauty. heralded for its woods and water. and famed by the outdoor enthusiast. The work he started.... to clean up and restore the French Broad River is just one of his many legacies. but the one we want to honor this evening.

Bill also knew his region, serving on the Executive Committee of LOSRC and becoming Chairman in 1975. He served in this capacity for two more terms.

He led in starting the Council's River Improvement Program through EPA's funding the state's second Areawide Water Quality Management Program, USDA's approval of the Mountain Valley's Resource Conservation and Development Council application, and the TVA funded programs of river cleanup, stream bank stabilization and river access. Transylvania County established in 1979, the Hap Simpson River Park... as one of the first in a system of 15 river access parks in cooperation with LOS. Today there are additional access points and two river camp sites for Transylvania County river users... a compliment to his vision.

It was no surprise when he was elected to represent us at the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1992. A long-time Republican, Bill is remembered as someone who was willing to find common ground between political parties... he valued the opinion of others and made sure to learn the facts behind an issue. He was a hard worker for just causes and sought to make Transylvania County, our Region and the State better for all citizens.

For his leadership over many years toward the improvement of the French Broad River and its tributaries, we are pleased to honor the memory of William Ives.”

How wonderful it is to see his daughter Page and son Brad continue Bill's legacy of public service. Please welcome them to the stage along with Bill's wife Ann.

(Ann, Page and Brad come to the podium to accept award and book, have photo taken, make remarks and take a seat.)

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