



Western Carolina Botanical Club

Hendersonville, North Carolina 28739

January 19, 2017

To: The Friends of the Oklawaha Greenway

The mission of the Western Carolina Botanical Club is to identify and study native plants and their habitats and to advocate the protection of biodiversity in our natural world. We have about 100 members. Our activities include weekly field trips (twice-weekly in April and May) in botanically interesting locations in Henderson and adjoining counties. During winter months we hold weekly indoor meetings at Bullington Gardens in Hendersonville. Thus we are very familiar with the multiple opportunities for botanizing in Henderson County.

Having a protected area where native species are encouraged to thrive within the city limits is of enormous value in encouraging the public to learn more about the plants of the Southern Appalachians. Furthermore the plantings encourage birds, animals, and insects to visit and thrive, vital components in protecting biodiversity.

In the past the Club held field trips on the Oklawaha Greenway between Jackson Park and Patton Park. The easy access and flat paved paths are of benefit for our older members who have problems walking on forest trails or inclines. It is easy for them to view the plants without much difficulty. We are excited at the prospect of new sections of the Greenway to explore and plan to add them to our field trip schedule for 2017.

The Board and members of the Western Carolina Botanical Club strongly support the planned extension of the Greenway from Jackson Park to Blue Ridge Community College.

Sincerely,

Penny Longhurst

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