

NEST BOXES

Bluebirds on the Oklawaha Greenway



Laurie Bingaman Lackey laid out, cut and drilled the material for 15 nest boxes in less than 90 minutes. [PROVIDED PHOTO]

By Joe Sanders
Henderson County representative

The Oklawaha Greenway is a 4-mile paved path in Hendersonville that meanders from Jackson Park to Berkeley Mills Park along Mud Creek through wetlands, urban settings and meadows. Because the Greenway follows the natural setting of the creek, it has a very gentle grade and is inviting to everyone from the young to the not so young.

Thanks to a generous grant from the North Carolina

Bluebirds Society, and collaboration between the city of Hendersonville, Apple Country Woodcrafters and the Young Naturalists 4-H Club, the Eastern Bluebird will find the Greenway more inviting.

The city of Hendersonville readily approved the project for a few reasons: It was of no cost to the city yet got citizens involved, the design of the nest box was in keeping with the natural setting, and it complements the pollinator,

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The Brown family assembling a nest box. [PROVIDED PHOTO]

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native trees and wild-flower themes exhibited along the greenway.

So far, 14 nest boxes have been installed in Jackson Park and along the Greenway. The hybrid nest box design that was used combines the best characteristics of the Jack Finch design and some improvements suggested by the X-Box design. Two major advantages of the Jack Finch design are the top covered with aluminum flashing and the straight saw cuts on the sides. Since the top is usually the first item to fail on a nest box, the aluminum flashing extends the life by many years and provides a reliably dry cavity

for nestlings.

The X-Box design, like the Jack Finch design, is a simple design and is easy to assemble. But the larger roof offers better protection from wind driven rain, and the inner roof offers better protection from the roof being ripped off by predators.

Laying out the material for a project of this size presented a challenge. However, The Apple Country Woodcrafters of Henderson County were all too happy to help. The size of the facility, the quality of the equipment, the fact that the design uses only straight cuts, and the enthusiastic support made it easy for Laurie Bingaman Lackey to layout, cut, and drill the material for the 15 nest boxes in less than 90 minutes.

We often hear that “kids today don’t get outside enough to see and enjoy the benefits found in nature.” Let there be no mistake this theme is not part of the culture of the Henderson County Young Naturalists 4-H Club. The Club held multiple sessions to learn about the plight of the bluebird and how they can help, assemble the nest box kits, and install four of them in Jackson Park.

According to Ranae Worrell, the club coordinator, the nest boxes will provide a sustainable project allowing older members to train new members and pass on the legacy. The close proximity to the meeting room will ensure that monitoring of the nest boxes. The nest boxes will

provide an opportunity to educate the public on the benefit of the bluebirds and how people can help ensure they thrive.

The Friends of the Oklawaha Greenway coordinate several “Walk and Talk” sessions on the greenway to discuss native trees, wildflowers and the benefits of pollinator habitats. Several volunteers have already stepped forward to help monitor the nest boxes.

Many thanks to the North Carolina Bluebird Society for making this project possible, to the Henderson County Apple County Woodcrafters for their assistance in cutting the material, and to the Henderson County Young Naturalist 4-H Club for their help in assembling and installing the finished nest boxes.



The Young Naturalists stand with a completed nest box. [PROVIDED PHOTO]