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3 Towns To Study Other Water Options

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

ASHEVILLE - Officials from Mars Hill, Weaverville and Woodfin agreed Tuesday to look at several options, including a proposed water treatment system on the Ivy River, to solve their water supply problems.

Although officials from the three towns agreed that a joint water system tapping the Ivy River is the most attractive alternative available, the system's estimated \$10.5 million price tag is a little hard to swallow.

"We want to participate," said Mars Hill Mayor Owen Tilson. "It's just a matter of can we financially afford it?"

Officials learned in February that Mars Hill's share of the water project cost would be nearly \$2.2 million. Weaverville's cost would be nearly \$2.3 million and Woodfin's, \$3.25 million. An unincorporated area of North Buncombe County -- including

Flat Creek and Ivy townships -- would account for \$2.8 million.

Weaverville and Woodfin have experienced water supply difficulties in recent years. Mars Hill is concerned about future expansion. Officials from the three areas began studying last March the use of the Ivy River, near the Madison-Buncombe county line, as a source of water.

Tilson was more pessimistic about his town's chances of participating in the much-discussed Ivy River project than representatives from the town of Weaverville and the Woodfin Sanitary Water and Sewer District.

Tilson said that Mars Hill's new sewer system and two on-going water and sewer projects mandated by the state have tied up hundreds of thousands of dollars of the town's money.

"There's no way we can participate unless we get a lot of funds or grants," he said. "We are very in-

terested in it and want to participate in it, if we can."

Weaverville Mayor Reese Lasher agreed that the availability of grant money would play a major role in whether his town participates.

"We would like to proceed with the Ivy River study to find out what funding we can get to make this project a reality," Lasher said.

Charles Anderson, director of the Woodfin Sanitary Water and Sewer District, echoed Lasher's comments.

"We're definitely interested in it," Anderson said. "We're already buying water from Asheville. In order to maintain our system, we'll have to get water from somewhere else. This looks like the most reasonable avenue we can pursue."

There are, however, other avenues available to each of the communities, said project engineer Gary McGill,

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Mars Hill Mayor Owen Tilson, left, listens as engineer Gary McGill explains his town's options in the proposed Ivy River project, a \$10.5 million plan to utilize the river for a municipal water system for Mars Hill, Weaverville and Woodfin.



Garbage along WNC rivers and streams will be the focus of efforts during Clean Streams Day on Saturday.

Streams To Get Spring Cleaning

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer

More than 500 Madison County residents will take to the streams, garbage bags in hand, this Saturday in an effort to clean up local waterways.

Clean Streams Day, now in its fourth year, is an annual event sponsored this year by Quality Forward, the French Broad River Foundation and Carolina

Wilderness Adventures to promote an awareness about water quality and conservation.

The cleanup effort is part of a four-county project in conjunction with Community Development Week and Spring Cleanup Week. The four counties involved in the project are Madison, Buncombe, Transylvania and Henderson.

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A Long Road Ahead

Ordeal Of Sex Abuse Case Continues for Children, Parents

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The trial of Andrew "Junior" Chandler, convicted last week of 12 child sexual abuse charges, is finally over, but for the children involved in the emotion-filled case and for the parents of those children, the ordeal is far from its conclusion.

For the children, the nightmares persist, despite the fact that the man accused of molesting them over a four-month period last year has been

'We've lost friends, we've lost some of our family members, some of us have lost homes, all in the name of justice.'

Nancy Burgess
Mother of victim

convicted and sentenced to serve two life terms, plus an additional 21 years.

For some of the children, bed-wetting remains a problem. The therapy and the counseling sessions

continue -- and probably will for a long time.

"He still sometimes wakes us up in the middle of the night, screaming," said Donna Nipper, mother of two young boys involved in the child sex-

ual abuse case. "He's still asleep, though. He's screaming in his sleep."

For the parents of the children, there are the lingering feelings of guilt and anger, confusion and frustration, the nagging self-imposed questions of "what if..."

"You don't want to think that something like that could happen to your daughter," said Beverly Squires, mother of a girl, now 3, in-

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Madison OKs A-B Tech Campus

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The Madison County Board of Commissioners has paved the way for the construction of a satellite campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical College, to be located on the Marshall Bypass.

The board last week approved the purchase of a tract of land at the intersection of U.S. 25-70 Bypass and N.C. 213 from Wachovia Bank at a cost of \$90,000.

Money for the purchase of that property will come from a total of \$800,000 appropriated by the General Assembly last year for the construction of a Madison County campus of A-B Tech.

Commissioners, through their at-

torney, Larry Leake, had been negotiating for several weeks with Wachovia Bank concerning the purchase price of the property.

Leake told the board at its regular meeting last week that he had obtained a signed commitment from the bank to sell the property for \$90,000.

That clears the way for A-B Tech officials to proceed with the drafting of plans for the new campus facility. County commissioners in December agreed to allow the A-B Tech Board of Trustees to assume responsibility for the construction of the satellite campus.

The facility, which will be deeded to Madison County, will then be leased to A-B Tech, according to the agreement.

County officials had looked at two other sites -- one near Madison High School and another on county-owned property near the landfill -- but agreed that the Wachovia site was the best.

A-B Tech officials agree. "We're delighted," said Ray Sawyer, director of A-B Tech's Madison County Center. "The key thing at that site is its high visibility and accessibility. A school building is no different than a business -- it needs to be visible and accessible."

The selected site is also centrally located between the county's main population areas, Sawyer said.

Architects are currently preparing preliminary drawings of the facility, and construction could begin as early

as mid-summer, he said.

"I think we're looking at possibly a year and a half before we actually occupy the building," Sawyer said.

The facility will probably be a 12,000 square foot building with several classrooms, a small auditorium and a utility laboratory, according to previously announced plans.

A-B Tech officials intend to use the facility as headquarters for their continuing education program currently in place in Madison County, Sawyer said.

"We'll also take a look at the feasibility of offering some off-campus curriculum classes here in Madison," he said.

Forest Plan Limits Uses, Timber Cutting

By TOM MATHER
The News and Observer

A new management plan for the national forests of Western North Carolina cuts in half the construction of new logging roads, reduces by a third the acreage open for timber harvesting and recommends three new wilderness areas.

The 15-year plan, released Friday by the U.S. Forest Service, calls for a slightly higher volume of timber cutting. But it scales back logging and road-building levels that the service had proposed three years ago in a draft of its plan for the Pisgah and Nantahala national forests. Although logging each year will increase by 5 percent, the new plan will reduce the

land scheduled for logging from 872,000 acres now to 568,000 acres.

"The overall net effect is that we're going to slightly increase the amount of wood that is harvested, and we're going to decrease the amount of federal inputs (for road)," Robert S. Cunningham, planning director at the Forest Service's state headquarters in Asheville, said in a recent interview.

According to Thurman Harpe, district ranger at Hot Springs, the plan shows increased consideration for scenic beauty by including three areas in the National Wilderness Preservation areas: Craggy Mountain, Harper Creek and Lost Cove, totaling 15,230 acres.

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N.C. Court Rejects Ponder's Appeal

From Staff Reports

The N.C. Court of Appeals has refused to review a conspiracy charge against Madison County Democratic Party leader Zeno Ponder.

The court last Wednesday refused to hear Ponder's request that a conspiracy indictment against him be dismissed on the grounds that the charge violates his constitutional rights.

Ponder's attorney, Herbert Hyde of Asheville, had asked the court in an unusual legal move to review the case before it ever comes to trial. The state appeals court usually does not hear such requests until after a case is tried.

Hyde had no comment on his ap-

pealing plans for Ponder's case.

J. Thomas Rusher, 24th Judicial District attorney, said that he believes Ponder may have the right to ask the N.C. Supreme Court to rule on the appeals court's refusal to review the case.

Ponder, who is charged with conspiring to profit from a land purchase made while he was a member of the N.C. Board of Transportation, had asked the appeals court to order a hearing to determine if Superior Court Judge Kenneth A. Griffin acted properly in his denial of an earlier motion.

Griffin, in Madison County Superior Court in March, denied a motion by Hyde to dismiss the indictment.

North Buncombe Wins Reprieve In Craggy Prison Controversy

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Several North Buncombe residents have won a temporary reprieve in their battle to keep a new prison out of their neighborhood, and are hoping state officials will use their newly won reprieve to the best advantage.

State property inspectors looked at

two of those sites -- a tract in Erwin Hills and a site near Interstate 26 and Broward Road -- Tuesday. Inspectors were unable to tour the third site, the old Washburn school.

Those sites were located in the neighborhood of a new prison. The new development comes after the Council of State postponed a decision last week on where to locate a replacement for crumbling Craggy Prison.

Residents who live near the first site, located at a horseshoe bend of the French Broad River between Woodfin and Alexander, have fought

the prison, saying it would damage property values.

The residents lobbied to a public hearing last Monday to protest the location of the 300-man facility on the proposed site, owned by Asheville developer W.C. Johnson.

The residents are charged that state officials had failed to consider

cheaper property one-fourth mile away from the current Craggy site. State Budget Director C.C. Cantorson denied the charge, saying that site closer to Craggy is too steep for a prison.

Johnson had previously promised that the Council of State would ap-

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