

The Banner

Loggers protest environmental conference



PHOTO BY JASON GRAHAM

A protest staged in response to an environmental conference drew loggers and government officials to Owen Hall Saturday.

Loggers gather outside Owen Hall to protest logging suspensions

By Greg Sessoms
Staff Writer

Government officials and members of logging and forestry organizations protested the suspension of 18 land-tract timber sales in Western North Carolina Sept. 11 on the UNCA campus. The protest was in response to an environmental conference that was held on campus that day. "I have not found a one of these environmentalists that would say 'Come on over. I want to deed my front porch to you, and you can put it in public lands.' But they want to say, 'We want to deed your lands for our purposes,'" said U.S. House Rep. Charles Taylor, a participant in the protest, in the opening speech.

Many of the participants in the environmental conference said they disagreed with the demonstrators' characterization of the Wildlands Project, a group of conservation biologists and activists whose goal is the recovery of whole ecosystems and landscapes in every region of North America, according to the organization's Website. "All of the organizations here at the conference today oppose any kind of government condemnation of private property or any other coercive techniques to protect land," said Brownie Newman, executive coordinator of the Western North Carolina Alliance (WNC Alliance). "All of the organizations here support permanent protection of public lands, which belong to the American people and not the timber industry. We

support giving economic incentives to private landowners to conserve their land." Participants in the protest included members of the Southern Appalachian Multiple-Use Council (SAMUC), a forestry group that promotes "the balanced integration and protection of forest land values" (water, fish and wildlife, timber, recreation, wilderness and grazing), according to their press release. Some SAMUC members described what they claimed were the Wildlands Project's radical goals, including government confiscation of private lands. "The goal of the demonstration was to bring to the public's attention to what the goals of the Wildlands Project are, how radical it is and what it would mean to

See PROTEST page 9

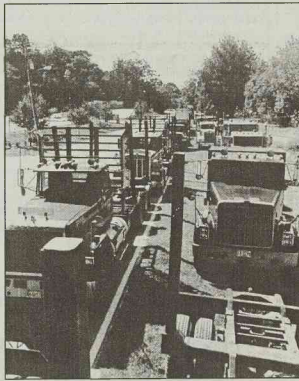


PHOTO BY TRAVIS BARKER

Logging trucks lined W.T. Weaver St. Saturday.

Debate over logging rights has history of conflict

By Phoebe Hicks
Staff Writer

The debate between environmental groups and the logging industry that occurred on UNCA's campus Sept. 11 is not a new disagreement, according to the executive director for a local environmental group. "The debate we're having now also happened right when the national forests were established," said Brownie Newman, executive coordinator for the Western North Carolina Alliance (WNC Alliance). "Unfortunately, the people who wanted to do the timber harvesting on the national forests won that debate originally."

This is probably the first of what may be a lot more as the battle intensifies," said Bob Slocum of the North Carolina Forestry Association.

Slocum said the debate and protest over the use of public lands for timber harvesting is new to the South. "It's been really common out West where there's been a lot of conflict," said Slocum. "Unfortunately, a lot of the national forests in the West have, in a lot of ways, been locked up. The industry is slowly sort of withering out there, and the battle is now moving to the South."

The protection of the forests by environmental groups will not come without a fight from the men and women who have grown up in and around the logging industry, according to one of the loggers.

Newman contends that his organization is not totally against timber harvesting.

"I will fight for my family and for my property," said Nathan Stewart, a truck driver who has been around the logging industry his entire life. "I will fight until I die. The loggers have not been getting to work, and the payments are due on their equipment. So what do you do when your children, your wife and your grandchildren start getting hungry, and you don't have the money to put food on the table? The loggers get very upset, and they will fight."

"You can do timber harvesting and still have some ecological benefits, but the question is, should that be happening on national forests?" said Newman. "We feel like national forests would be places where we should protect those values to the highest degree possible, and we support sustainable forestry on private lands."

Since the establishment of the national forests, there has been a concern over whether or not they should be used purely for habitat and recreation, or should be commercially logged. "National forests were set up about a hundred years ago," said Newman. "There

"My dad lived until he was about 90 years old, and he logged all of his life," said Stewart. "He logged until about two months before he died. Now I'm a truck driver, and I haul the logs. That's my livelihood. That's what's raised my family and my grandchildren."

Fred Harden said he is a forester who has often fought for the right to harvest trees.

"Ten years ago, it started

See FOREST page 9

NCCCR receives \$100,000 toward new building

By Sarah Wilkins
Staff Writer

The N.C. Center for Creative Retirement (NCCCR) received a \$100,000 grant from the Cannon Foundation Inc. for a new building on UNCA's campus. With a lack of classroom and parking space for seniors citizens in the NCCCR program, the building is needed, according to Cassie Stevens, the director of the College for Seniors program, a division of NCCCR. The organization now has \$2,042,121 of the \$3 million needed to build the Reuter Center. "This is not a fill, this is a necessity," said Stevens. "I

knew we were going to make it a reality. "We hope to have (all) the money in hand, and start the building by the fall of 2000," said Stevens. The UNCA Board of Trustees gave five and a half acres to the organization. According to the master plan of UNCA, all educational buildings will be on the inner ring of campus, while all programs will be on the outer ring. "We are concerned because we don't want to be isolated from students," said Stevens. The building's location will be on the inner ring of Broadway. The location "has been criticized by our members because they like being right in the middle of things," said Beth Lazer, co-chair of A Place to

Call Home building committee and administrative assistant to the chancellor. The Cannon Foundation Inc. chose the program because they have an interest in supporting good programs that contribute in significant ways to the community, according to Stevens. The foundation made the decision in late spring of 1999, according to Stevens. All of the money for the Reuter Center has been raised from members, foundations, and corporations, according to Lazer. "Last January, we received a challenge grant from the Janive Foundation for the amount of \$1,250,000," said Stevens. "Some residents, however, said they were angry about the loss

See NCCCR page 9

Parking changes cause problems

By Holly Beveridge
Staff Writer

UNCA students, faculty and staff returned to find significant changes in campus parking areas this semester, according to the public safety director. In addition to the South Ridge parking deck, which opened at the start of the semester and added approximately 200 new spaces for resident students, UNCA made several alterations in the distribution of existing parking spaces, according to Dennis Gregory, director of UNCA's Public Safety Department. "We think parking is much better this year than the past two or three years," said Gregory. Some residents, however, said they were angry about the loss

of parking spaces close to their dorms. "There's nowhere to unload," said Martens, a junior biology major who lives in Governor's Village. Martens said she would not be so angry if UNCA had waited for the construction to be completed before taking away the Zageig spaces. According to Gregory, the construction should have been completed before the start of fall classes. "They're way over schedule," said Gregory, who said he hopes the workers will finish within the next week. "My understanding is they're at a process now of being fined every day that it continues." Nonetheless, some think students have blown the parking issue out of proportion. "Don't the students realize that even the farther lot puts them closer to classes and cam-

pus than many of the other universities in our state?" said Pat Latta, a senior management major who commutes. Latta called UNCA's parking complaints "minor ones." Several students, however, expressed satisfaction with the changes. Jennifer Peterson, an undeclared junior living in Founders Hall, said she couldn't be happier. "I don't complain; it's awesome parking," said Peterson, who previously attended Appalachian State University. Peterson, who found it difficult to park anywhere near campus at Appalachian, said she likes the ability to park "right next to your dorm" at UNCA. According to Gregory, commuter students gained about 24 extra parking spaces in one of the lots across from Zageig Hall that had been previously

designated as residential student parking. "We lost three parking lots," said Martens. Martens complained that spaces given to commuters in the Zageig lot and spaces taken up by the current Justice Gym construction have caused difficulties for Village residents. Commuter students may find parking easier in the future as UNCA officials consider giving them even more spaces. "Now that we've got the parking deck for the resident students, it is our hope that we can give the entire Zageig lot back to commuters," said Gregory, "because that seems to be a real central parking place for most commuters. They like to park there."

See PARKING page 9