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# Smoky Mountains Wilderness Watch

Second Chapter Meeting – Final Minutes

Date: 01/07/2026

Location: Frog Level Brewing Co, Waynesville, NC

Counties Represented: Haywood, Jackson, Swain

Meeting Type: Chapter Planning / Board Meeting

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## 1. Chapter Status Updates

- The chapter expects to receive the official approval letter within 2–3 weeks.
  - Foundational checklist items are substantially complete.
  - The remaining requirement is opening the chapter bank account.
  - Coordination Item: Beth and Tesslynn will work jointly to coordinate availability and complete the bank account opening together.
  - Board Update: Trisha formally accepted a position as a board member and will serve in an outreach capacity.
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## 2. Fundraising & Financial Planning

### Kickoff Events

- The group discussed using kickoff events and/or workshops to reach the initial \$500 fundraising requirement.

- Target areas identified for early outreach include:
  - Canton
  - Waynesville
  - Sylva
- Future outreach may expand toward Bryson City as chapter capacity grows.

### **Financial Check-Ins**

- The board agreed to implement quarterly financial check-ins, beginning March–April.

### **Sponsorships**

- After discussion, the board agreed on a \$100 minimum sponsorship level.

### **Donations & Accounting**

- The board confirmed that Venmo will not be used.
  - Donations will be processed through NCWF systems using a QR code to ensure clear and consistent accounting.
  - A manual donation form (PDF) is available for use in locations without internet access.
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## **3. Policies & Compliance**

- The board confirmed agreement with:
  - Sexual Harassment Policy
  - Conflict of Interest Policy
  - Previous Meeting Minutes

- No objections or concerns were raised.

## **Insurance & Liability**

- In response to a question regarding insurance, it was noted that chapter activities operate under the North Carolina Wildlife Federation's general liability coverage.
  - It was also acknowledged that event-specific waivers may be required depending on the nature of individual activities.
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## **4. Communications & Media**

### **Website**

- The chapter website is live and mobile-ready.
- Board members are encouraged to submit short bios and headshots for inclusion on the site.

### **Social Media**

- The chapter currently maintains a presence on:
  - Facebook
  - Bluesky
- An Instagram account has not yet been created.

### **Newsletter**

- The need for a newsletter lead was identified.
  - No formal newsletter template is currently in place.
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## 5. Partnerships & Guest Presentation

### EcoForesters Presentation

- Andrew (EcoForesters) presented on their work, which includes:
    - Forest conservation and preservation
    - Invasive species removal
    - Tree planting
    - Cleanups
    - Outreach and woodland workshops
  - Their primary focus includes kudzu management.
  - It was also noted that Hurricane Helene significantly impacted EcoForesters' ongoing work, affecting the pace and scope of some efforts.
  - Prescribed fire was discussed as a management tool; public perception challenges were noted due to recent severe weather and fire season concerns.
  - No formal partnership decision was made at this meeting.
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## 6. Event Venues & Scheduling

### Meeting Schedule

- Wednesday or Thursday evenings were identified as the most workable meeting times for the group.

### Venue Discussions

- Potential venues discussed included:
  - Balsam Mountain Inn (possible donated venue with promotional collaboration)

- Dog Bar (Waynesville) — suggested for Wednesday evenings; parking concerns were noted
- Potential venues by area:
  - Sylva: Gallery 1, Sylva Social
  - Dillsboro: The Jarrett House (noted separately as a distinct location from Sylva)
- Maggie Valley was discussed and not pursued due to venue limitations and constraints.

### **Kickoff Event Goal**

- The initial goal is to identify three kickoff event locations, with priority given to Canton, Sylva/Dillsboro, and Waynesville.
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## **7. Fundraising Event Concepts**

- A live music fundraising event was discussed as a potential concept (e.g., venue partnership with a per-pint donation).
  - Event planning order was clarified:
    1. Secure venue
    2. Secure band
  - Holiday weekends (e.g., Memorial Day) were noted as potentially strong timing options.
  - No formal decision or commitment was made at this time.
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## **8. Education & Youth Outreach**

- Trisha will reach out to local schools regarding potential educational engagement and outreach opportunities.

- The group briefly discussed the possibility of future school-based engagement or fundraising activities tied to educational programming.
  - These ideas were exploratory in nature only; no specific approach or activity was selected.
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## **9. Leadership & Capacity Needs**

- The chapter may have up to 12 leaders; six are currently active.
  - Roles identified as needed include:
    - Newsletter Lead
    - Social Media Lead
  - The group discussed the value of identifying 1–2 representatives to attend:
    - Municipal council meetings
    - Planning and zoning meetings
  - This role would support awareness and engagement without overlapping or interfering with other organizations' finances.
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## **Adjournment**

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