



Environmental
Sustainability Board
City of Hendersonville, NC

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

NOTE FROM BOARD CHAIR

Dear Council,

On behalf of the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB), I want to thank you for your unwavering support of our board initiatives over the past year. As stated in your vision statement, "Hendersonville is a vibrant mountain city where the government and citizens work together for a high quality of life." Our board recognizes that having a high quality of life is directly linked to a healthy environment. The ESB cannot steward a healthy environment without your support, so thank you for allowing us to engage and advise on city matters pertaining to environmental sustainability within our beloved city.

Sincerely,



Kelly Pahle
ESB Chair

Highlights

1. Community Projects

This year, the board piloted a small community sponsorship program. The board heard requests for funding related to sustainability and/or environmental projects being implemented by members of the community. The purpose of these sponsorships is to engage, empower, and encourage community members to take their action! As a result of this program, the Board was able to contribute funds towards the implementation of 4 projects that align with our board's mission. These projects include the Brooklyn Creek Bird Sanctuary, Brooklyn Community Gardens, Monarch Migration sponsorship, and Caregivers of Mother Earth's "Everyday is Earthday" educational programming.

The Brooklyn Creek Bird Sanctuary is now a destination in Sullivan Park for bird watchers, nature lovers, and more. ESB funds went towards four birdhouses and a feeding station for all to enjoy.



The next project sponsored was ADA-accessible garden path for the Brooklyn Community Garden. ESB recognizes a sustainable Hendersonville needs to prioritize the accessibility for all community members.

Continuing again this year, the board also sponsored 18 classrooms through the Symbolic Monarch Migration educational program which mimics the monarchs' journey by engaging more than 10,000 children from across the United States and Canada in creating paper butterflies to send to students in Mexico.

The last community sponsorship was to Caregivers of Mother Earth for their "Everyday is Earth Day" signs which were featured at Hendo Earth Fest. The signs provide simple actions anyone can take to reduce their impact on the environment.



2. Hendo Earth Fest

This year marked the second annual Hendo Earth Fest which has become a widely popular festival that brought an additional 1,000 visitors to Main Street. The festival included 46 exhibitors as well as 7 engaging musical acts.

The purpose of the Hendo Earth Fest is to promote community education for all ages on environmental and sustainable practices, inspire action, and renew and expand commitments to protect our planet.

Local and regional environmental allies focus on participation/hands-on activities and demonstrations designed to educate, renew and expand action to protect our Western North Carolina environment and natural resources.

Multiple ESB members led the sub-committee to plan the festival which also included partnering with non-profits and other community groups.



3. Sustainability Hero Award

This year marked the second annual Sustainability Hero Award which celebrates outstanding achievement in the pursuit of the City's commitment to lead by example in pursuing environmentally sustainable practices critical to preserving the community for future generations. The Sustainability Hero award honors an individual City employee or team that is a champion for change and is responsible for development and implementation of sustainability practices in Hendersonville and the surrounding community.

This year, the board recognized Public Works Superintendent, Brandon Mundy for his work with the City's brush collection program reducing fuel and staff resources, analyzing the trash and recycling routes, and implementing a tracking system.

"Sometimes, it's as simple as looking at what services the city is already providing and finding ways to improve them so they are more efficient and thus more sustainable," said ESB board member Mary Ellen Kustin. "We commend this year's recipient for doing just that."

4. Sustainability Demonstration Station

New for the board was the approval for establishing the first Sustainability Demonstration Station. This project, led by the board's Waste Reduction Subcommittee, will demonstrate multiple sustainability practices community members can implement at their own homes with a focus on composting and will offer the City's first small scale community compost drop off location. Phase 1 of the project will be completed in the 2024 fiscal year with the last phase 2 completed in fiscal year 2025.





5. Mayor's Monarch Pledge & Bee City USA

The board submits the yearly report for the Mayor's Monarch Pledge which is a yearly commitment to raise awareness for the decline in the Monarch butterfly and is organized by the National Wildlife Federation. The board also incorporates pollinator education in Hendo Earth Fest to assist in meeting the annual Bee City USA requirements.

6. Participation in City Policy & Plan Updates

A representative from the board participated in the various committees formed to provide ESB feedback on the Gen H Comprehensive plan, The Sustainability Plan, Tree Ordinance, and the Parks and Greenspace Plan. The ESB appreciated being invited to participate and provide an environmental sustainability lens on these important plans that will shape city projects and policies for the future.