



Quarterly Report FY24 - Q1

Organizational News



A high-angle, close-up photograph of a waterfall, showing the turbulent, white water cascading over dark, mossy rocks. The water is captured in motion, creating a dense spray of droplets and bubbles. In the upper portion of the image, several people can be seen from behind, standing on a paved path and watching the waterfall. The overall scene is vibrant and dynamic, with a mix of green moss, grey rock, and white water.

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I. BOARD & STAFF



BOARD & STAFF

As the new fiscal year began, a new team came together as Transylvania native Mollie Gordon joined the TCTDA as Marketing and Communication Specialist. Her duties will include a focus on social media and content creation, along with local communications and working with the marketing partner agency, Market Connections, on fulfillment of the marketing plan.

The TCTDA is committed to creating a sustainable outdoor economy in Transylvania County and recently joined like-minded individuals and organizations at the 2023 Outdoor Economy Conference in Cherokee, NC. The TCTDA was a sponsor, and as you can see, set up quite the booth. The four-day conference provided expo space, inspirational programming, workshops, field visits, cross-sector summits, facilitated networking opportunities, and much more. Core themes included sustainability, equity, accessibility, and inclusivity.

In preparation for the beginning of a new calendar year, along with a new board of directors, the board reviewed Transylvania County Resolution #35 – 2021. The board and staff had noted at the prior transition to a new year that there were some minor changes to the timing of certain protocols that would better align them with what worked in practice. In consultation with legal counsel, at the September 28, 2023, TCTDA Board meeting, a motion was approved to recommend specific changes to the resolution to the Board of Commissioners.



II. BOARD & COMMITTEE ROSTERS



BOARD MEMBERS

Layton Parker, **Chair** Accommodations Owner/Operator

Dee Dee Perkins, **Vice Chair** Interested Individual

Aaron Baker City of Brevard Appointee

Ali Lien Member-at-large

Dana Antonuccio Accommodations Owner/Operator

Isaac Allen Interested Individual

Jessica Whitmire Town of Rosman Appointee

Larry Chapman Transylvania County Appointee

Madeline Magin Member-at-large

MARKETING

Dee Dee Perkins, **Chair** Board

Dana Antonuccio Board

Jessica Whitmire Board

Dionne Hodgson Community

Unfilled Community

Unfilled Community

TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS

Jessica Whitmire, **Chair** Board

Aaron Baker Board

Ali Lien Board

Eric Caldwell Community

Grant Bullard Community

Mandi Bentley Community

DESTINATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Dee Dee Perkins, **Chair** Board

Larry Chapman Board

Madeline Magin Board

Nicole Bentley Community

Melanie Spreen Community

Unfilled Community

GRANTS

Layton Parker, **Chair** Board

Dana Antonuccio Board

Isaac Allen Board

FINANCE

Layton Parker, **Chair** Board

Isaac Allen Board

Madeline Magin Board

III. PARTNER SUPPORT



PARTNER SUPPORT

The TCTDA provides many free and paid opportunities for tourism-related businesses and attractions in Transylvania County. These are shared with tourism partners through a booklet that is updated annually. Several exciting upgrades have been introduced to our **Partner Marketing Program** as the first quarter focused on the launch of our 2024 offerings. To better serve our tourism partners, we took a fresh look at how opportunities are made available as a response to the growing demand in partner participation.

Our marketing opportunities are now accessible completely online with our [2024 Partner Marketing Program Booklet](#), click to view. Its accompanying new online Request Form allows partners to fill out and submit their preferences with ease.

We spread the word about the many special businesses and attractions in Transylvania County in various ways throughout the year. To ensure that we have accurate and timely info to include our tourism businesses or non-profits in some of these unpaid opportunities, we have introduced an additional **Partner Profile Form** online designed to be the gateway to allowing us to support our partners.

Our 2024 Partner Marketing Program was unveiled at a well-attended **Kickoff Social** at 185 King Street. Both familiar faces and new ones enjoyed an evening that included our marketing opportunities, networking, and learning industry data from our annual report.

The late summer and early fall months brought new editions of both Blue Ridge Outdoors and WNC Magazine, providing our industry partners immense visibility through our special print co-op program. Our Spotlight e-newsletter in July allowed a local business the chance to tell its story to our base of over 27,000 interested travelers. In September, a few partners donated their goods or services as part of an Explore Brevard gift basket that was auctioned off at the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's largest annual fundraiser, the Denim Ball.



Kickoff Social



Partner Marketing Booklet, Request Form, and Partner Profile Form



Co-op Ad



Spotlight E-newsletter & Kickoff Social



Explore Brevard Gift Basket

IV. GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING



GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS FUNDING

Projects that are aligned with the mission of the TCTDA's Transylvania Always initiative, which is to be a leader in the effort to take care of Transylvania County's natural resources in order to create a safe and enjoyable user experience and ensure that these assets are here for future generations. Funding for Q1 is listed below.

Q1

- **City of Brevard: “Bracken Preserve Expansion & Trail Enhancement” \$25,000**
 - In a joint effort with Destination Infrastructure funding, this grant assists the City of Brevard to acquire 34 additional acres to expand Bracken Preserve and initiate the creation of new and more accessible trails within the property. It will result in providing a recreation destination within walking distance of downtown Brevard that is enjoyable for a much wider range of user groups than the preserve's current condition allows.

Total FY23 funding: \$25,000

TCTDA grant allows city to close on additional Bracken Preserve property

Sep 12, 2023

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [p](#) [@](#)

The city of Brevard's Bracken Preserve trail network is about to grow by 34 acres due to a \$49,999 grant from the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority as well as the support of Conserving Carolina and individual donors. The new parcel — and two lots in Waterford Place that will be donated by HomeTrust Bank — will allow for the construction of three to four miles of new, beginner-friendly trails in the preserve, according to a city news release.

First opened to the public in July 2012, the 395-acre Bracken Preserve sits west of downtown Brevard adjacent to Pisgah National Forest. Its eight-mile multi-use trail system connects to Forest Service Road 475-C providing access to the former Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education.

COUPON DEALS

NEWSPAPER ADS

Trending Recipes

GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

DESTINATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Projects that make a substantial impact on the tourism infrastructure of the destination, with cycling, downtown Brevard, entryways to our public lands, arts, music, and outlying communities being identified as priorities. These are typically brick and mortar projects. Funding for Q1 is listed below.

Q1

- **City of Brevard: “Bracken Preserve Expansion & Trail Enhancement” \$24,999**
 - In a joint effort with Transylvania Always funding, this grant assists the City of Brevard to acquire 34 additional acres to expand Bracken Preserve and initiate the creation of new and more accessible trails within the property. It will result in providing a recreation destination within walking distance of downtown Brevard that is enjoyable for a much wider range of user groups than the preserve’s current condition allows.
- **Transylvania County: “Holiday Season Christmas Tree” \$4,900**
 - To keep our decorations as bright as our holiday cheer, the TCTDA will fund the purchase of 140 commercial UV-protection treated, shatterproof, giant replacement ornaments and red bows to adorn the Transylvania County Courthouse’s fir tree in style.

Total FY23 funding: \$29,899



GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

TOURISM MARKETING FUNDING

Projects that are designed to generate overnight visitation and/or add significant value to the visitor experience. Strong preference is given to efforts that impact traditionally slower periods of visitation. These projects are often events but can also be programs or other initiatives. Funding for Q1 is listed below.

Q1

- **Friends of Silvermont: “Silvermont Pumpkin Fest 2023” \$4,000**
 - This annual fall and Halloween event at Silvermont Park is not only a local favorite but attracted 40% of last year’s participants from outside the county. This year’s family-friendly event introduces a new scene on the trail, “Land of Waterfalls” while providing more tours of the Silversteen Museum with the help of the Heritage Museum.
- **Transylvania Heritage Museum: “Aluminum Christmas Tree Display” \$3,600**
 - This exhibit of vintage aluminum Christmas trees will bring the sock-hopping 50s to life in this year’s display, along with special presenters, programs, and a mid-century historic holiday home ramble. Running for the greater part of November through January, ATOM provides entertainment for visitors during the shoulder season.
- **Transylvania County Historical Society: “Behind the Mask; Cherokee Mask Makers & Their Legacy” \$2,500**
 - A six-week traveling exhibition at the Allison-Deaver House is the first of its kind, with accompanying events, children’s activities, a speaking engagement with the curator, Anna Fariello, and a Cherokee food-tasting closing reception. The aim of this historical exhibit is to reinforce the significance of Cherokee masks, their history, use, meaning, and significance.
- **Cedar Mountain Music Project: “White Squirrel Artisans Market” \$2,750**
 - This family-friendly artisans market features over 70 of Western North Carolina’s most talented makers and musicians, with Deerwoode Reserve as its new venue to accommodate the exponential growth. This mountain town celebration gives visitors a taste of our culture, food, art, and music in a single event.



FREE ADMISSION • FAMILY-FRIENDLY • FREE PARKING • ON-SITE LODGING AVAILABLE

WS AM WHITE SQUIRREL ARTISANS MARKET
PRESENTED BY RE/MAX LAND OF THE WATERFALLS

Autumn Festival
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21ST | 12-5PM
70+ LOCAL VENDORS • FOOD TRUCKS • LIVE MUSIC • COTTON CANDY
FACE PAINTING • COFFEE • CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES • RAFFLE

DEERWOODE RESERVE 395 RIVERSEDGE ROAD, BREVARD, NC
ONLY MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN!

SPALDING MONTOSH 12:00-1:00PM
DIPPY & ME 1:15-2:30PM
HIS & HERS 2:30-3:30PM
JANE KRAMER + LILLIE SYRACUSE 3:45-5:00PM

BENEFITING THE WHITE SQUIRREL INSTITUTE & CEDAR MOUNTAIN MUSIC PROJECT

DEERWOODE RESERVE • MOCOCO • RE/MAX LAND OF THE WATERFALLS • Newfound ARTISAN • BREVARD COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

TOURISM MARKETING FUNDING CONTINUED

Q4

- **Transylvania County Parks & Recreation Department: “Light Up the Night - Silvermont” \$4,000**
 - In conjunction with Light Up the Night in downtown Brevard, Parks & Rec is providing additional experiences for event goers free of charge, including a skating rink, hayrides to Silvermont, music, holiday tasty treats, and activities for children. In place of Christmas in the Park, this new holiday tradition builds on the existing efforts of community partners to make the holidays even brighter.
- **Conserving Carolina: “Forks of the River Fly Fishing Festival 2023” \$500**
 - This collaborative two-day festival between Headwaters Outfitters and Davidson River Outfitters celebrates and educates fly-fishing anglers with seminars, clinics, guest speakers, local vendors, live music, and kids activities. Centered around conservation and education, proceeds go toward Conserving Carolina’s stream and river restoration work in the county.

Total FY23 funding: \$17,350



V. TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS



TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS

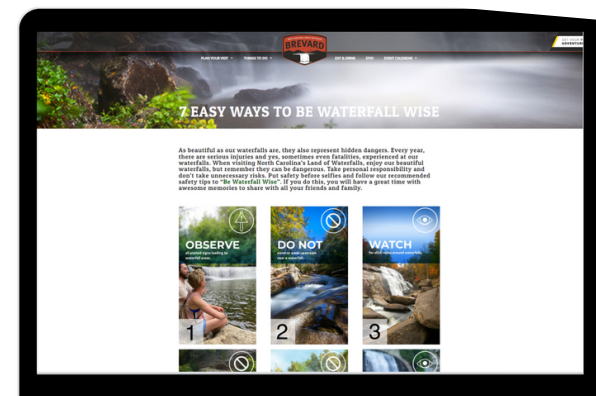
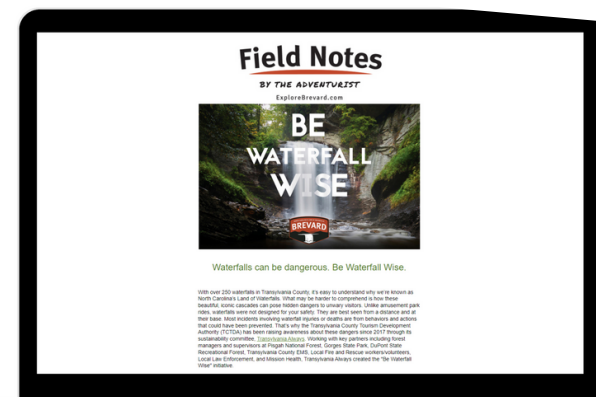
The Transylvania Always Committee (TAC) started the fiscal year with our Leave It Better and Be Waterfall Wise messaging in full swing as it carried through the summer months. The TAC continued their support of the Rosman Riverfront Park Master Plan through participation in the public engagement process, specifically as it relates to the French Broad River access points and sustainability. And as the committee looked toward the future of safety messaging, discussions have begun to take place around expanding outdoor recreation safety to incorporate how it relates to water activities.

LEAVE IT BETTER:

During the latter half of the summer, Leave It Better messaging presented three fresh faces with the help of some local outdoor recreation experts: Jessica Whitmire of Headwaters Outfitters, Earl B. Hunter, Jr. of Black Folks Camp Too, and Kevin Bischoff of Gorges State Park. The Leave It Better Video Campaign released these three videos on our social media channels, website, and other avenues to join in Trashesquatch's efforts to inspire people to get outdoors and enjoy nature responsibly.

BE WATERFALL WISE:

With the visitation to our public lands in full swing during July, Transylvania Always made another push of our Be Waterfall Wise campaign through digital formats, like the blog "7 Easy Ways to Be Waterfall Wise" and Executive Director Clark Lovelace's interview coverage with WSPA Channel 7 to raise awareness during summer travel.



Be Waterfall Wise Filed Notes & Waterfall Safety Blog



Waterfall Safety WSPA Feature



Leave It Better Video Series with Local Experts

VI. DESTINATION INFRASTRUCTURE



DESTINATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The Destination Infrastructure Committee (DIC) is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the infrastructure and resources of Transylvania County as a tourism destination. This committee was created following the success of the Transylvania Always initiative and committee. Like that committee, much of the work of the DIC involves TCTDA funding support for local projects that meet the committee's objectives. That sometimes involves defining and prioritizing current needs and approaching key parties in hopes of a shared interest in addressing those needs.

Along those lines, the DIC identified bike racks and signage as two infrastructure elements in need of improvements. Members of the DIC presented at the City of Brevard's Downtown Master Plan Committee meeting in September to advocate for a cohesive plan for these two areas to be conducted by a consultant with City of Brevard oversight and partial funding by the TCTDA.

TCTDA/DIC Recommended Focus Areas:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure:

- Bike racks - fix existing ones and add more racks in strategic locations
- Approve a design standard to improve consistency
- Create a comprehensive sidewalk, public space plan that will organize sidewalks to provide more space for furnishings

Wayfinding Signage:

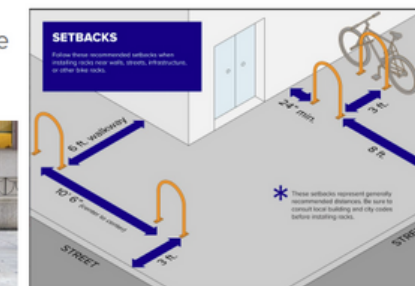
- Add wayfinding signage along Greenway
- Re-evaluate current pedestrian signage in downtown Brevard
- Identify missing signs and repair/replace damaged ones, both pedestrian and larger wayfinding

** These recommendations are in the approved Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan**

These two recommended projects are interrelated

Bike Racks:

- Establish a design standard for each type of bike rack to be used throughout the city:
 1. Point of use single bike racks
 2. Bike Corral or multiple racks
 3. Long-term covered /secure storage
- Identify & place in strategic locations

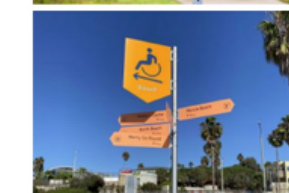


Bicycle/Pedestrian Signage For the Greenway:



Wayfinding Signage

- Update and add to existing system to be inclusive of all communities in the City and County:
 1. HOB/Downtown
 2. King Street District
 3. Rosenwald
 4. Pisgah Forest
 5. Rosman
 6. Cedar Mountain
 7. Toxaway
 8. Balsam Grove
 9. Penrose
- Implement wayfinding signage on the bike path



VI. TRENDING & TOURISM INSIGHTS



TRENDING & TOURISM INSIGHTS

Occupancy proceeds dropped by 4% in fiscal year 2022-23 compared to the prior year, with the third and fourth quarters producing a more substantial drop than the first two quarters. That said, proceeds for the year were still the second highest experienced by Transylvania County. Between this downward trend and unknowns like inflation, elections, and other national/international issues, there is much more of a question mark when peering into the future than normal.

Tourism in general continues to be strong in Transylvania County, with many tourism partner owners/operators gearing up for a busy fall and nesting away savings to make it through the lean winter. The TCTDA continues to focus its resources on the shoulder and casual season to support these partners by generating demand when they need it most, with upcoming holiday and winter sweepstakes as examples of these efforts. Workforce challenges continue to be listed most frequently by owners/operators as their biggest current hurdle.

