



APPSTATE • 2024-2029

Pathways To Resilience

Community Resilience Forum


January 2025



NEW: Hurricane Helene Archive

Hurricane Helene Archive

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Welcome to the Hurricane Helene Archive.

In late September 2024, our community and region experienced the most severe weather disaster of our lifetimes, [a storm made worse by the warming of our planet](#). Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc via high winds, flooding, landslides, and the cascading impacts of all of these. In the aftermath of the storm, members of our community have worked together in extraordinary ways, helping each other to get through challenges and begin the marathon of recovery from storm damage.

This project is a collective, crowdsourced effort to document the stories of Helene, and we invite you to be a part of it.

Please share Hurricane Helene digital materials with the community and the world by uploading your media. We are working on making this archive viewable by the public.

[Click here](#) to share your digital materials with the Hurricane Helene Archive.



Liz Whiteman

Executive Director

Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture



Snapshot of Helene Damage in the Farm Community

- 35% of farms in the 21-county disaster area reported damage
 - Average of \$37,000 for clean up and recovery per farm
- Over \$59 million in recovery costs *for farms only* region wide
- Less than 4% of western North Carolina farms are covered by federal crop insurance programs

Source: Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project www.asapconnections.org



Andy Hill

High Country Regional Director
and Watauga Riverkeeper
Mountain True



Early days of Helene response were focused on search and rescue, critical need delivery to isolated communities and assessing critical infrastructure



Documenting Impacts, Debris Inventory, and Surface Water Quality Monitoring





Our Riverkeepers tested hundreds of drinking wells across WNC in partnership with NC DHHS and Riverkeepers across the south. We also distributed hundreds of filters supplied by Wine to Water. We found about 30% of wells were contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria.

Documenting Ecological Impacts



Ongoing River Cleanups and supply distribution



Reforesting our watershed with livestakes



How can we make the High Country more resilient?

Policy Solutions: How and where should we rebuild? Engage with local, state, federal governments on climate policy.

Embrace and Invest in your local food system

PLANT TREES! Healthy Riparian zones are crucial for flood resilience.

Support aggressive dam removal and reforestation initiatives.



Get involved with MountainTrue

mountaintrue.org/eventscalendar

mountaintrue.org/protect-hellbenders



Kellie Reed Ashcraft

Executive Director
Watauga Housing Council



Snapshot of Housing-Related Concerns

Pre-Helene Snapshot

- 37%-Watauga Housing Cost-Burden
- Aging Housing Stock
- 0%-Vacancy Rate of Multi-Family/Off-Campus Student Rentals

Post-Helene Snapshot

- *6755 Watauga FEMA registrations (*undercount-only FEMA!)
- 951 FEMA approved-Housing Assistance
- 2 households placed & 6 approved-FEMA TTHUs

Post-Helene Housing & Housing Response



Community Housing Response & Resiliency Post-Helene

Immediate & Intermediate

- Neighbor to Neighbor & Individual Community
- Local Churches & Nonprofits
- FEMA
- External Private Support
- Regional/National Churches & Nonprofits

Intermediate & Long-Term

- Local Support
- High Country Housing Partners
- Long-Term Recovery Groups
- Local, State, Federal Government

What Are We Learning To Make Us More Resilient?

Communication

- Have Local Groups as Key Partners
- Involve in EM Protocols
- Partner FEMA w/ Trusted Locals
- Develop Other Emerg. Comm. Methods

Immediate/Transitional Housing

- Streamline Housing Codes
- Encourage FEMA THA Participation
- Develop “Lessons Learned” Report
- Increase Local/Reg./Nat’l Connections

Intermediate/Long-Term Housing

- Advocate & Secure Funding To “Build Back Better”!

How Can You/Interested Groups Contribute?

Participate!

- Local Housing Efforts
- Watauga Housing Council! (kellie@wataugahousing.org)
- Watauga/Other LTRGs

Advocate!

- Continued \$ & Existence of FEMA
- Helene-Impacted State/Federal Housing Funding
- Increased LIHTC Funding
- Housing Code/Zoning Reform

Support!

- Funding to Local Housing Efforts
- Funding to Helene-Related Reg./Nat'l Groups

David Jackson

President/CEO

Boone Area Chamber of Commerce







Watauga County
Childcare Tuition **\$206,000**
for October 2024



High Country
Business Resilience
Disaster Grant **\$458,500**
*distributed to
162 businesses*

PRIORITIES



Housing
Support



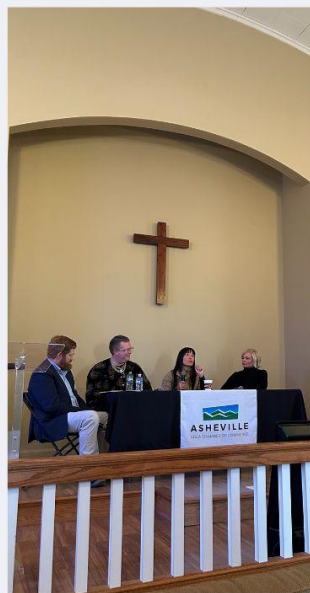
STABLE
Workplaces



Early Childhood
Education &
Development Fund



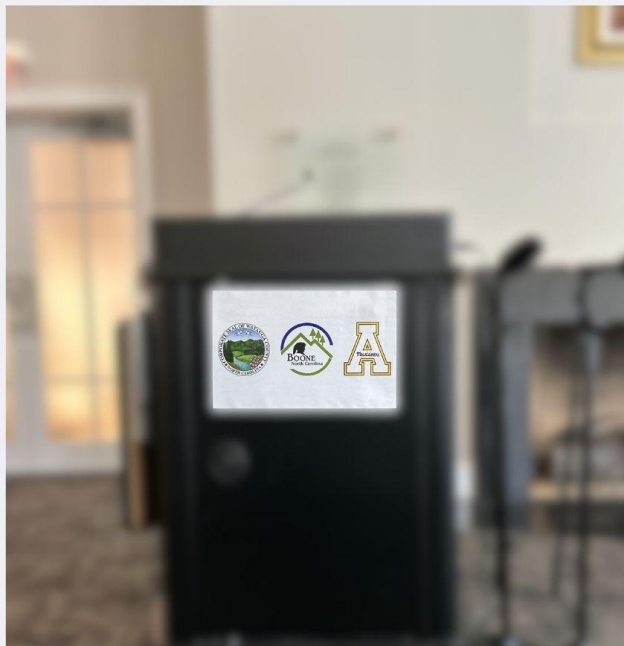
General Operating
& Community
Support



J.W. Kenney, McDowell Technical Community College
David Jackson, Boone Area Chamber of Commerce
Lexee Zutz, Owner of Marion Wines









We Begin Again at 9:30

A film by Dr. Beth Davison, App Docs

Featuring the
community of
Todd, NC



Panelists:
Kelly McCoy
Renata Dos Santos

Conversation with our panel



ANDY HILL
Watauga
Riverkeeper /
Mountain True



LIZ WHITEMAN
Blue Ridge
Women in
Agriculture



KELLIE REED
ASHCRAFT
Watauga
Housing
Council



DAVID
JACKSON
Boone Area
Chamber of
Commerce



KELLY MCCOY
& RENATA DOS
SANTOS
RiverGirl Fishing
Company

Mark your calendars:



Saturday, February 22
Appalachian Theatre

2:00 Boone Docs Juried Films
about the Appalachian Region

7:00 Features the documentary
work of local filmmakers sponsored
by *High Country Humanities*

hchumanities.appstate.edu

Climate Resilience Forum

Tuesday, February 25, 12:30 pm, Parkway Ballroom (PSU 420)

Learn how communities can minimize the impacts of extreme events



Dr. Ashley Ward




Brock Long



resilience.appstate.edu/events


resilience.appstate.edu

APPSTATE 125

 **Pathways**
To Resilience
APPSTATE - 2024-2029

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Pathways to Resilience



Pathways to Resilience enacts App State's current [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) (QEP). Every ten years as part of our reaccreditation process, we select a new QEP topic — an area of student learning and/or student success that aligns with institutional needs and priorities — for coordinated, campus-wide investment. Our climate literacy QEP builds on our previous QEP: [Global Learning](#).

