

CML

carolina
mountain
life

Celebrating 20 Years

ABSOLUTELY
PRICELESS!
SPRING 2017

read us online at cmlmagazine.com

Join Us
for the Journey...

“...a wonderful read for 20 years!”

The New River, A New Perspective

By Lynn Rees-Jones with photographs by Craig Dillenbeck

Art is often beautiful, sometimes controversial and hopefully enlightening. While some would not consider artfully arranged trash to be insightful, the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University has an exhibition that will likely surprise you, intrigue you and provide new perspective of the threats to the health and well-being of the water, land and people living along the New River.

Before visitors even get inside the front door of the visual arts center on King Street in downtown Boone, they will glimpse a path of river trash flowing down the wall and across the floor of the center's Mayer Gallery. The origin of the "river" is found at the top of the 29' gallery wall; then recreates the path of the North Fork and South Forks of the river which then "flow" to a reclaimed millstone on the gallery floor where the forks converge into the New River. This is all part of the exhibition: "Collective Vigilance: Speaking for the New River."

For those familiar with the New River, they know it is a treasure. The 320-mile New River is one of the oldest rivers in the world and certainly the oldest in the United States. The headwaters originate high in the mountains of northwestern North Carolina, deep in the heart of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The New, as it is affectionately called, actually begins as two rivers, the North Fork in Ashe County and South Fork in Watauga County. The two forks join in Alleghany County and continue in a somewhat unusual northward flow from North Carolina's Blue Ridge through southwestern Virginia and West Virginia into the Kanawha and Ohio rivers—its waters eventually reaching the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Mississippi River.

The mission of Appalachian State University includes a strong commitment to environmental issues and sustainable communities. The vision for this project was a product of Appalachian professor Tom Hansell's graduate semi-

nar, "Sustainability and the Arts in Appalachia," which is part of the Center for Appalachian Studies.

Tom Hansell and New River Conservancy president, George Santucci met at a conference in 2010. They discovered they had a common bond and hoped that in the future they might find a meaningful project on which to collaborate. They found their match in "Collective Vigilance: Speaking for the New River," which is inspired by the New River Conservancy's strategic priorities to share and foster research, educate and inspire people to act, and to protect and restore the river and its tributaries.

Linda Slade, New River Conservancy's development director acknowledges the strong traditions and family roots found along the peaceful banks of the river. "So imagine if you will, more than 40 years ago when a plan was set in motion to place two dams on the New River in southwest Virginia to generate power that would have displaced more than 3,000 residents, flooded thousands of acres of farmland and destroyed the ecology of this historic river. The National Committee for the New River now New River Conservancy, grew out of the fight to halt construction of the dams. For more than 40 years, New River Conservancy has been a voice for the river. The mission of the NRC is simple - to protect the water, woodlands and wildlife of the New River watershed."

The river of trash is the most visually striking portion of the exhibit and is made up of abandoned trash found and excavated by a team of students, faculty, community partners and Turchin staff. The river clean-up literally fed the exhibit and what is seen in the gallery is just a sampling of 21,185 pounds of trash and 645 tires pulled from the river during fall semester 2016. Tom Hansell recalls the challenges of transporting the trash to his barn to sort through it and select the most interesting objects for the exhibition which then had to be transported to the basement of the Turchin Center for cleaning and preparation prior to being hung in the gallery. The

placement of the trash in the gallery was a very collaborative effort as each individual piece was pondered. Bed springs, a VW car hood, shoes, refrigerator door, rusty metal cans, inner tubes, construction debris, kids toys, handcuffs, dog houses are but a few examples of items in the exhibit.

The "river" of trash is likely what will first catch the eye of visitors, however there is much more to see. Numerous regional artists provide a meaningful perspective of the river through their compelling art.

A mural by Jomi Ray highlights the beauty of the native plants along the river. Ray is committed to community and environmental art in the High Country and has a BA in sustainable development from Appalachian. Her mixed media mural is spray painted using plant materials to create soft textures which contrast with the striking painted and individually hand-cut native plant patterns. This mural symbolizes the more than four miles of riparian buffers, including 13,000 trees and shrubs that were planted in 2016 as part of the New River Conservancy riverbank enhancement projects. Following the exhibition, the murals will be available to travel to area schools and NRC meetings.

Also in the gallery are images by Winston-Salem photographer Card Galtie who has been working with the NRC since 1995 to document their activities. After receiving a Sustainability in the Arts grant through the Sustainability Council at Appalachian State University, Boone photographers Joshua White and Maggie Flanigan have spent the past two years interviewing and photographing the people who live, work, and play along the New River. Underwater macro-photographs by documentary filmmaker Tom Hansell illuminate the gallery windows and create a stained-glass dappled effect in sunlight.

Additional information is found on iPads in the gallery and include class research as well as maps of the headwaters and the ECHO communities which were hand drawn by retired Appalachian



River Of Trash



South Forks Convergence



Riparian Mural by Jomi Ray



River Of Trash (Close up)



STONE WALLS
 STEAKS • PRIME RIB • SEAFOOD
 828-898-5550

**"The High Country's
 Premier Steak & Seafood
 Restaurant"**

Reopening
 After Remodel April 20th
 Come See Our New Look!
 New Full Service Bar
 with Signature Drinks
 Check Out our New Menu
 Items

Serving Daily from 5 pm
 Brunch starting May 5th
 ...every Friday, Saturday
 & Sunday

Hwy 184
 DOWNTOWN BANNER ELK, NC 28604
 (GPS - 344 Shawnee Hwy)
 www.stonewallsrestaurant.com

Open Tuesday-Saturday • Free Admission
 Six galleries. Changing exhibitions of new and historically
 important work by national, international and regional artists
 828-262-3017 • 423 W. King Street, Boone, NC • tcva.org

T C V A
TURCHIN
 CENTER
 FOR THE VISUAL ARTS
 Appalachian

ENSEMBLE
 Formerly in Blowing Rock, now at
 the Historic Banner Elk School

ensemblesstage.com
 828-414-1844
 185 Avalon Circle, SE
 Banner Elk, NC

Banner Elks Year-Round Professional Theatre

RDW
 REAL ESTATE
 A UNIVERSITY OF LAW

Real Estate Closings and Legal Representation in the High Country

John B. "Jak" Reeves • Tamara C. DiVenere
 Anné C. Wright • Jeffrey J. Walker* • Glenn S. Kern

280 Queen Street, Boone, NC 28607 • 828-268-9640 • 800-451-4299
 202 East Main Street, West Jefferson, NC 28694 • 336-246-7172
www.lawyerforthehighcountry.com
 *Of course! - licensed in both NC and TN.

Photography of the New River

Studies professor and noted author **Patricia Beaver**.

The New River exhibition flows beyond the Mayer Gallery of the TCVA and will extend to banks of the New River at the 221 Access State Park in Ashe County on May 5-7. **Keith Bryant**, a Charlotte sculptor, has created, and will install, 365 ceramic globes along the river banks. This weekend event will include the opportunity to camp, attend talks by park rangers and community nonprofit leaders, and to discuss environmental issues currently facing the New River. Additionally, water quality walking tours will take place on the campus of the university on April 8 and 22.

The synergy of collaborative artists and partners of this project creates an exhibition that is visually engaging, informative and thought-provoking. According to Hunsell, this project has spurred additional faculty research including adjunct professor, Cody Miller, who has continued on with research of nearby historic Winebarger Mill, located on the south fork of the New River. He recently conducted the lecture "A Story of Family, Food and Place" as part of the lecture series hosted by the TCVA.

The Turchin Center lecture series is held during fall and spring semesters and are led by visiting or exhibiting artists, scholars and practitioners. These lectures provide deeper insight into creative practice, context for current exhibitions or contemporary issues shaping the world in which art is created, experienced and interpreted.

This exhibition is the most ambitious collaborative partnership ever undertaken at the Turchin, and has provided for the discovery of strong voices for the river and the arts. Other community partners include the Appalachian Regional Commission, Appalachian Teaching Project, Blue Ridge Conservancy, Middle Fork Greenway, New River State Park, Elk Knob State Park, Wine to Water and Pleimmons Student Leadership group. Through this exhibition, new voices have been found and lasting friendships formed.

According to Turchin Center curator Mary Anne Redding, "We are committed to connecting communities through art. We invite you to come into the galleries then get involved with one or more of our partners in this exhibit and to go back out into the community and *share*

the river with more information and a deeper commitment to preserving this important natural and cultural resource that flows through North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia."

According to Slade, the New River Conservancy discovered an unexpected partner in a university classroom through participation in this project. "We see our work through new eyes and it is beautiful."

The "Collective Vigilance: Speaking for the New River" exhibition will be housed in the Turchin Center's Mayer Gallery through July 29, 2017.

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts is the largest facility of its kind in the region and fulfills Appalachian State University's long-held mission of providing a home for world-class visual art programming. The TCVA is located at 423 West King St. in Boone. Hours are 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Tuesday - Thursday and Saturday and Noon - 8 p.m., Friday. The Center is closed Sunday and Monday and observes all university holidays. Admission is always free, although donations are gratefully accepted. For more information, to become a donor, be added to the mailing list or schedule a tour call 828-262-3017 or visit tcva.org. You can also follow the Turchin Center on Facebook and Twitter @TurchinCenter.