

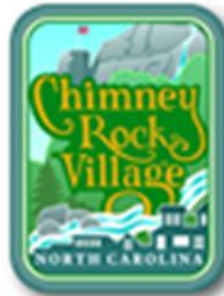
**Weed Action Coalition  
of  
Hickory Nut Gorge**







Who are we?





**What is our mission?**

**“to identify, remove, and prevent the further proliferation of non-native invasive species in the HNG watershed in order to preserve the biological diversity, health, and scenic beauty of the Hickory Nut Gorge.”**





**The Hickory Nut Gorge Natural Area is ranked as one of the top five most bio-diverse areas of North Carolina.**

**Of the over 500 plant species, 36 are listed as rare or significant.**

**There are 15 rare animal species.**

**There are 14 significant natural communities.**

**What makes the HNG so special?**



# History of the coalition

- 2010:** Invasives identified as priority by the Friends of Hickory Nut Gorge
- 2011:** CMLC applies for and receives “Pulling Together” NFWF grant
- 2012:** CMLC hires coordinator
- 2012:** CMLC establishes Americorps HNG Associate position
- 2012:** Partners identified and initial meeting conducted
- 2013:** Focus on groundwork for 5-year strategies
- 2014:** Progress on all strategies



## WAC-HNG Strategic Management Plan 2013-2018

**Overall Goals:**

1. Sustain and grow an effective and productive WAC-HNG.
2. Review and revise the long-term strategic plan every 3-5 years.
3. Achieve a target reduction of invasive exotic species in the gorge.

	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Inv/ Restor/ Monit.</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Educ/Outreach</b>	<b>Manpower</b>
<b>Goals:</b>	Establish sustainable funding methodology for WAC-HNG which also stimulates local businesses related to WAC-HNG purpose.	Determine extent of invasive exotic infestation. Develop operating plan protocols for restoration and future monitoring.	Promote effective, integrated management of priority invasive exotic plants within the HNG watershed as described in the operating plans.	Increase public awareness of both the impacts of invasive exotic plants and the importance of natural resource conservation.	Establish an effective, sustainable source of volunteer labor for WAC-HNG projects.
<b>Outcomes:</b>	\$130,000 /year	100% inventory, est.protocols	90 % reduction per site	100% landowner contact	Sustained invasives SWAT
<b>Strategies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue grant opportunities</li> <li>• Stimulate local businesses related to WAC-HNG goals</li> <li>• Solicit site management plan requests from local landowners using fee for services structure</li> <li>• Develop a cost-share program with follow-up contractual obligations</li> <li>• Establish yearly fundraising drive in the gorge</li> <li>• Pursue WAC-HNG endowment fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory and map public, private and ngo lands within HNG watershed for invasive exotic species</li> <li>• Develop target reduction % based on inventory</li> <li>• Prioritize sites for treatment based on operating plan criteria</li> <li>• Establish criteria for restoration</li> <li>• Develop ongoing inventory and monitoring rotation protocols</li> <li>• Develop method for early detection of invasive exotic species</li> <li>• Identify resources for restoration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish goat operation</li> <li>• Write management plans for priority areas</li> <li>• Schedule SWAT days for treatment of high priority private landowner areas</li> <li>• Schedule SWAT days on high priority ngo lands</li> <li>• Identify and solidify resources for paid control of invasives</li> <li>• Purchase chemicals in bulk for partner organizations</li> <li>• Articulate position on types of effective treatments (ie, goats vs. chemicals vs. manual control)</li> <li>• Establish contact with key landowners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish fundamentals of clearinghouse function</li> <li>• Develop network of lay people focused on extending reach of WAC-HNG</li> <li>• Measure brand awareness of WAC-HNG</li> <li>• Define network of agencies for referrals</li> <li>• Engage the public through media campaigns</li> <li>• Identify various targets of media campaigns</li> <li>• Utilize existing festivals and partner activities</li> <li>• Establish HNG invasives day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and target rotation of groups for participation in SWAT days</li> <li>• Conduct SWAT workshops for training</li> <li>• Write core curriculum for training volunteers</li> <li>• Recruit landowners for neighborhood party organization</li> </ul>

**Administrative Record-keeping Responsibilities:**

herbicide purchases and use	field work	outreach/landowner contacts	volunteers	bookkeeping	research	subcommittee reports
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## Initial steps

- 1) **Prioritize invasive species**
- 2) **Identify two-pronged approach**
- 3) **Develop protocols for WACHNG's operation**
  - a) **Monitoring**
  - b) **Treatment**
  - c) **Restoration**
  - d) **Volunteer program**
- 4) **Project treatment costs**
  - a) **Volunteer**
  - b) **Contractor**
  - c) **Labor crew**
- 5) **Develop and implement operating plans**







## Keys to progress

- 1) **Partner contributions**
  - a) **Private landowners**
  - b) **Municipalities**
  - c) **Government agencies**
  - d) **Conservancies**
  
- 2) **Full-time Americorps to conduct inventory and workdays**
  
- 3) **Ability to receive continuing grant funding**
  
- 4) **Identification of labor crew to treat invasives**
  
- 5) **Development of database to track progress**



## Current status

- 1) Outreach
  - a) Billboard – 942,000 exposures
  - b) News publications – 123,641 exposures
  - c) Presentations – 1,406 people reached
  
- 2) Manpower
  - a) 993 volunteer hours
  - b) approx. \$21,000 saved
  
- 3) Inventory
  - a) 3275 acres
  - b) high priority snha's
  
- 4) Treatment – 479 acres
  
- 5) Site management plans
  - a) ordered – 14
  - b) written – 11
  - c) in process of implementation - 7





**When one tugs at a  
single thing in nature, he  
finds it attached  
to the rest of the world.**

**–John Muir**



## Contact WAC-HNG:

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