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Southeast RCAP Board of  
Directors Meeting

# Progress in North Carolina

NCRCAP: A Contractor for Southeast  
Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.



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#### Statistics in North Carolina

Technitrain  
12 projects  
5 workshops conducted

OCS  
5 projects  
1 workshop in planning

## Recent Project Highlights in North Carolina



Jackson Hamlet  
Community  
Action &  
NCRCAP's Bob  
Taylor brought  
NCSU Cooper-  
ative Extension  
and Integrated  
Water Services  
to a workshop  
on decentralized  
wastewater sys-  
tems as a com-  
ponent of crea-  
tive community  
design. *The  
Conservation  
Fund. photo.*

### Creative Community Design and Decentralized Wastewater the focus of Jackson Hamlet workshop

On March 1st, Jackson Hamlet residents began to envision how their community could create options for water recycling, entrepreneurial development, and sustainable water resource management. At a workshop organized by Bob Taylor of NCRCAP, Jackson Hamlet Community Action heard from Dr. David Lindbo of North Carolina Cooperative Extension on how communities can utilize principles of alternative and cluster systems to revitalize their communities and allow for new centers of growth (economic or residential), while at the same time avoiding some of the common pitfalls of centralized sewer — high cost, more intensive development pressures, loss of groundwater recharge. Hal House with Integrated Water Strategies then presented a recent study on a specific decentralized wastewater plan for the Jackson Hamlet community. This study was completed to address the long-standing need in Jackson Hamlet to eliminate failing onsite wastewater systems. With guidance from Bob Taylor, the community has worked over the past year to become knowledgeable about and investigate how alternative systems and designs could work in Jackson Hamlet and present benefits to the community in terms of entrepreneurial opportunities (i.e. using recycled wastewater to support a landscaping business) and the capacity to better guide subsequent development.

The workshop also provided the opportunity for other groups to learn about decentralized wastewater design and more sustainable community development. Staff members from the Blue Springs Hoke County Community Development Corporation and the Sandhills Area Land Trust attended the workshop to learn about how to integrate creative community design in their affordable housing development efforts. Representatives from Voices for Justice and The Conservation Fund attended to learn about tools that hold potential for the communities with which they work that will bolster efforts of sustainability and self-determination.

The next step for Jackson Hamlet will be to take their ideas and the report presented by House and engage the Town of Pinehurst in a discussion of what Jackson Hamlet would like to see in their community. Bob Taylor will be there every step of the way.

### Ridgedale Community supports connection to Asheville Water System

The Ridgedale Homeowner's Association has been struggling for years to adequately run its water system. When NCRCAP's Rich Holder presented them with an opportunity to get funding in order to connect to the City of Asheville's water system, the HOA board said a resounding, "Yes!" Holder has worked intensively with the mobile home park's HOA over the past three years. When he first visited Ridgedale, the residents did not own the land where their well was located and, thus, did not have a clear legal right to control and operate their well. Consequently, periodically the community did not have water. A complicating factor was that the HOA was not meeting or collecting dues. Holder assisted the community with reorganizing a new and active HOA which eventually allowed the community to purchase the lot and well. With clear control of their water source, Holder worked with the HOA to make some technical upgrades, and achieve compliance with SDWA regulations. This work was no small feat for this community of less than 40 homes. However, sustainability continues to be a challenge for this community. The NC Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources' Public Water Supply program administers a Disadvantaged Communities Program. This program provides grant funding to small water systems to consolidate with larger water systems. A portion of the DWSRF monies are set aside each year to finance this program. Rich Holder has started the process with the NC Public Water Supply regional office in Asheville to enroll Ridgedale into this program. Thus far, all stakeholders are on board — PWS, Ridgedale, and the City of Asheville. Holder anticipates that by the end of 2008, Ridgedale will be well on its way to finalizing their participation in the Disadvantaged Communities Program and fixing its water problems.



### Drought and the State of Water Infrastructure Continues to Dominate North Carolina Picture

As is the case in many other parts of the Southeast, NC residents find themselves in the fifteenth month of a drought that does not promise to let up. While late Feb and March rains have eased the drought, as recently as the middle of February half of the counties in NC faced exceptional drought conditions, a situation that could easily return unless steady rains continue. Coupled with drought conditions are the challenges presented by aging water infrastructure that statewide, and especially in rural communities, has great needs for repair and upgrades. A report by the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, WATER 2030, estimates that \$16 billion in state, local, and federal funds are needed to maintain and expand drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. These issues are being discussed and grappled with from the governor's office to the smallest communities like Robbinsville, NC, population 747 which recently received emergency funding to drill three additional water supply wells. In fact, water resources — drought, infrastructure needs, and managing water demands — are the single focus of a gubernatorial forum candidates forum scheduled for March 25th. NCRCAP staff confront these issues throughout its work in communities and see them as a major focus for the remainder of 2008. NCRCAP staff is planning a workshop session on Drought and Emergency Management strategies in rural communities for the annual conference of the NC Community Action Association. NCRCAP plans to update its website to include resources for communities and individuals on dealing with drought and lessening its impact. Several communities in eastern and western NC have requested assistance from NCRCAP staff with developing funding proposals that will assist them with shoring up delapidated infrastructure resources as well as extending infrastructure to areas with known public health and environmental risks.