

ronmental issues. Five tests are taken by each team, one covering each subject area. The team members collaborate on the answers. The top seven high school teams and top seven middle school teams in the area (16 western counties) advance to the state competition. When the scores were tallied, Haywood County had two high school and four middle school teams headed to Burlington. This is a wonderful testimony to the dedication and hard work of Gail Heathman, the District's Education Coordinator, and the Haywood County teachers that sponsored and worked with the teams.

HWA is very proud of the students' success and is honored to help these outstanding youth. The future of Haywood County will be in good hands.

HWA Holds Annual Membership Meeting

HWA conducted its annual membership meeting at the Lambuth Inn on 12/11/2003. The evening's festivities included the election of five HWA board directors, awards presentations, accomplishments for 2003, a buffet dinner and Christmas songs performed by the Haywood County Women's Chorus. The turnout was outstanding with nearly 70 members and guests in attendance.

The HWA membership re-elected Richard T. Alexander, Billy Case, Don Ebaugh, Scott Loftis and Skip Thompson to serve a three-year term on the HWA Board of Directors. This was followed by a presentation highlighting our 2003 activities including grants received, water quality monitoring, greenway projects, education programs and an update on HWA membership.

Barry Stevens showed a series of slides and explained several projects the Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District completed in 2003. The projects were funded with grants from EPA and the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund as well as cost share dollars provided by the landowners. These projects are focused on reducing stream sedimentation, with those in the Richland Creek Watershed aimed at reducing the sedimentation of Lake Junaluska. These grants were received in 2001 and 2002 and are the result of a collaborative effort by the District, SWNC Resource Conservation and Development Council and HWA. It's great to see conservation work being accomplished in Haywood County.

HWA director Ron Moser stressed the importance of local partnerships and the resulting big payoff for Haywood County. Great strides have been made locally because the natural resource community is working together. So far HWA has been a part of developing 34 successful grant applications totaling \$2,232,560. A majority of these grant dollars have helped landowners correct erosion and stream sedimentation problems and they helped fund educational programs in the county. We still have a long way to

go, but working together we can expect good things for Haywood County.

The highly anticipated awards program honored two individuals and one town. Each year HWA presents its annual awards to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to improving or preserving waterways in Haywood County. The recipient receives a wonderful framed print of a different waterway in the watershed.

HWA presented its Richland Creek Award to an outstanding partner, the Town of Waynesville. The Town has been a key player, along with the Richland Creek Action Committee, HWA and others, in the effort to develop a greenway system along Richland Creek. When completed, this 2.4 mile greenway trail will allow people, young and old, to walk or bike from town all the way to

Lake Junaluska and back. Tim Plowman of the Waynesville Parks and Recreation Department has led the Town's efforts and accepted the award for the Town.

This year's Lake Junaluska Award went to an outstanding volunteer, Joetta Rinehart, for her numerous contributions. Joetta has been a member of our Board of Directors and Executive Committee for many years. She played a major role in forming HWA into an effective and reputable conservation organization. Her numerous contacts have helped increase community and business involvement in the work of HWA and she has

been instrumental in recruiting new members. She has also served as a key liaison with the Lake Junaluska Assembly that has led to many joint efforts. Joetta currently serves as Treasurer and helps plan the annual membership dinner each year.

HWA's Pigeon River Award was presented to Bill Yarborough for his outstanding contributions to protecting water quality in the Pigeon River Watershed. Bill joined the Board of Directors in 2002 and is a key member and interim Co-chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee. Bill has made a career of putting conservation measures on the ground. He worked with many Haywood County landowners as the Soil Conservation Service District Conservationist (former position) and is currently serving as Regional Agronomist with the NC Dept of Agriculture and as a Supervisor with the District. We appreciate Bill's expertise and guidance on what works in the field of natural resource conservation.

After the awards program, Gordon Small was recognized for his work as HWA Project Manager. He has been instrumental in our success since he joined HWA in 1999. Gordon received a digital camera as his "retirement" gift. Special thanks were also extended to the loyal members and supporters of HWA. Their generous donations enabled HWA to help Canton (\$1,000) with their conservation easement in the Rough Creek Watershed and the District with travel expenses for the Envirothon Teams' trip to the state competition.



L to R in photograph: Joetta Rinehart, Bill Yarborough and Tim Plowman