

Greening Up The Mountains

Mark Haskett

Submission Date

Feb 4, 2026 1:14 PM

Name of Initiative

Greening Up The Mountains

Contact Person

Mark Haskett

Title

Event Coordinator

Address

83 Allen Street

City

Sylva

State

NC

Zip Code

28779

Primary Phone Number

828-506-2042

Email

greeningupthemountains@townofsylva.org

Organization Type

Municipality

Organization Tax ID

56-6001348

Time of Year of Initiative

Peak (April - November)

Describe the timing of the initiative in as much detail as possible (please list key project dates, milestones, timeframes, etc.)

Greening Up the Mountains festival will celebrate its 28th anniversary this year. It is really the first big outdoor festival of each year in our area. While it is not in Off Peak time of year according to TDA it is really close with the date in April of each year. With the arrival of warmer spring weather it provides a great opportunity to showcase the town of Sylva and Jackson County. The festival has rebounded from the Covid years and has averaged over 12,000 attendees the past three years. We have already reached near capacity for arts/crafts and food vendors after only two weeks of the online registration going live. Last year we had a huge waiting list after reaching capacity in less than a month

Describe your initiative

Greening Up the Mountains Festival was first created in conjunction with Earth Day celebrations. The festival still thrives to be good stewards of our beautiful town and area. We continue to place an emphasis on practices which minimize the environmental impact caused by our activities. We will once again offer opportunities for non-profit organizations that are committed to preservation/sustainability of the environment to participate alongside our arts and crafts vendors. We have drinking water stations that were installed by TWASA to help us eliminate plastic bottles and do not allow vendors to use plastic bags.

Describe what previous experience applicant has in successful execution of similar endeavors

Both event coordinators have co-chaired this festival for the past three years. Mark worked with the Mountain Heritage Festival at Western Carolina University for two decades, and Tammy has many years of experience with conferences and event planning at WCU.

Website

<https://www.mainstreetsylva.org/greening-up-the-mountains/>

Social Media Channels - paste URLs below

[www.facebook.com/Greening Up The Mountains](http://www.facebook.com/Greening-Up-The-Mountains)

Amount of Funds Requested?

3000.00

Date Funds Needed

Apr 25, 2026

Give a narrative description of how this project will increase tourism and visitation in Jackson County

A sample written survey was conducted with 100 attendees last year. We learned that 40 percent of attendees were from outside Jackson County. Twenty percent of these attendees were from out of state including Maryland, Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi, Massachusetts, Texas and Tennessee. We also learned that most people knew about the event by word of mouth, social media, and selective advertising targeting all western North Carolina, northern Georgia and upstate South Carolina. The other draw is from parents of WCU students who chose this weekend to visit with their child enrolled at the university. We hope to provide exposure to the many other attractions of Jackson County during their visit hoping to entice attendees to plan return trips to Sylva and our surrounding areas.

If this initiative has occurred before, what is new that differentiates it from prior years?

We continue to strive to find the best footprint for festival in the confined area that we have. We will continue to expand our demonstration area in which attendees can observe blacksmithing and glass blowing.

What is your advertising and marketing plan for your initiative?

The plan will be like past years with many of our local media outlets promoting this event. We do plan to expand our advertising to some additional outlets located in Buncombe County that will have a broader reach with hopes of attracting attendees from areas north, east, and south of Asheville which include the upstate of South Carolina and north Georgia. This is where we see potential funding from this grant to assist us in growing the number of attendees.

Do you agree to acknowledge the 'Jackson County TDA' in materials as required? Any releases or ad placements should have a statement that "the event was made possible, in part, by the Jackson County TDA." Print ad placements, where/when possible should include the JCTDA logo.

Yes

Total anticipated cost of initiative

41,000

Total funds your organization will provide toward total cost?

0

Detail funds requested from other sources and note commitments or anticipated receipt of funds from other sources

We solicit sponsorships from many of our local businesses. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 in sponsorships this year. We also use the vendor fees to offset expenses of the festival.

Anticipated Attendees from Jackson County:

Between 7,000 and 10,000

Anticipated Attendees from outside Jackson County:

Between 5,000 and 7,000

Anticipated overnight stays generated:

Local motels report good business for festival weekend.

How did you determine audience/attendance numbers and where do they come from?

We can approximate numbers based on surveys, police drone footage, occupied parking spaces, and vendor feedback.

How will you measure success of your initiative?

Feedback from sample survey last year stated very positive remarks with only one common complaint which was low number of close parking spaces. We do our very best to entertain the attendees by the quality of arts and craft vendors, food vendors, live music and the demonstrations that are presented each year.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

We appreciate the support from Jackson County TDA each year.

Note - This form would not let me attach requested documentation so I will be sending these in an email to Nick Breedlove.

Signature:

Mark Haskett

GUTM:

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2019-2020 COVID	2021-2022 August	2021-2022 April	2022-2023 April	2023-2024 April	2024-2025 April
Revenues:										
Electricity		200	245	285		70	140	175	105	130.00
Non Profit Vendors	1,350	1,200	1,320	1,320		630	810	1,550	1,620	1,590.00
Merchant Vendors		310	50	50		0	0	0	0	0.00
Food Vendors	1,840	2,610	1,995	2,470		900	1,125	1,750	1,470	1,480.00
Beverage Vendors			500	500		250	125	125	250	250.00
Arts and Crafts Vendors	8,525	6,550	9,440	10,040		4,010	7,350	8,860	9,890	18,400.00
GL Difference (Refund)			10			-100	0			
Total Vendors	\$11,715	\$10,870	\$13,560	\$14,665		\$5,760.00	\$9,550.00	\$12,460	\$13,335	\$21,850.00
Sponsorship	5,755	4,770	7,900	8,000		6,650	6,450	14,000	16,900	13,400.00
Grants	1,011	2,760	0			0		2,500	2,500	2,500.00
Raffle	169	176	97	175		0	0			
Merchandise								1,101	950	0.00
Total Revenues	\$18,650	\$18,576	\$21,557	\$22,840		\$12,410.00	\$16,000.00	\$30,061	\$33,685	\$37,750.00
Expenses + OT	\$12,429	\$13,627	\$11,887	\$19,700		\$13,489.80	\$17,598.55	\$30,027	\$29,500.50	\$29,405.13
					OT ADDED					
Profit/Loss	\$6,221	\$4,949	\$9,670	\$3,140		-\$1,079.80	-\$1,598.55	\$34	\$4,184.50	\$8,344.87
In Kind	\$2,618							\$6,000	\$5,040.30	\$4,900.00
Non-Profit Vendors		35	24	24		7	10	14	14	11
Demonstrators								3	5	
Merchant Vendors		6	1	1		0	0	0		
Arts and Crafts Vendors		103	113	123		42	77	92	107	122
Beverage Vendor			4	4		2	1	1	2	2
Food Vendors		13	10	13		4	5	7	7	6
Total Vendors		157	152	165		55	93	117	135	141
Sponsors		13	16	17		9	8	11	15	16
Grants		2	0	0		0	0	1	1	1

Greening Up The Mountains Festival Returns to Downtown Sylva on April 26 for Its 27th Year



Jesse Boldin, from Green Energy Park, demonstrates blacksmithing



Mary Bennett, left, of Macon Face Painting, with Blythe Hopkins of Cullowhee



2024 Greening Up The Mountains

The Greening Up The Mountains festival returns to downtown Sylva for its 27th year on Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival showcases both traditional and contemporary arts, music, food and beverages. Originally created to coincide with Earth Day, the event still aligns with the goal of environmental stewardship.

The festival is particularly special this year, as it comes after Sylva was spared the catastrophic damage many mountain communities endured from Hurricane Helene in September. “We hope that our festival will encourage attendees to come back to our beautiful mountains,” says Mark Haskett, who coordinates the event with his wife Tammy. “Tourism is such a big industry for most mountain communities and many businesses depend on our out-of-town visitors.”

The Town of Sylva has completed several improvements to the festival footprint this year, including a new public bathroom facility at the center of town. The festival offers something for all ages, with entertainment and activities for children, such as face painting and visits with the mascot “Paws” from Western Carolina University. In addition, Jackson County Green Energy Park will offer demonstrations of blacksmithing and glassblowing.

More than 160 vendors will be in attendance this year, an increase from past years, spotlighting a diverse range of products including pottery, jewelry, woodworks, honey, photography, paintings and more. “We open up the festival to artisans from all over Western North Carolina and beyond,” Haskett says. “Our biggest challenge is having to turn vendors away because of limited space.”

The music lineup is curated by Bernadette Peters, director of the Sylva Downtown Association. “We have a great team that works together in the planning and implementation of the festival,” Haskett says. “That team includes Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, Town of Sylva and Sylva Downtown Association, Sylva Police Department and other community volunteers.”

For the Haskett family, the festival represents a chance to give back to the community they have called home for 40 years. “My wife Tammy and I love calling these mountains home,” says Haskett. “We both retired from Western Carolina University and saw this as a great way to give back to the community when offered this opportunity.”

Learn more at MainStreetSylva.org.