

A FORUM:

# North Carolina's Future

MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS!

NOTES FROM THE FORUM

SUMMER 2005

## A letter to North Carolinians

Dear Friends,

In Spring 2005, more than 400 business and civic leaders participated in a series of two-hour forums held in Raleigh, Asheville, Charlotte and Greenville. The forums, "North Carolina's Future: Make It Your Business," focused on the critical link between the environment and the economy and the important role that natural capital (as measured by natural resources) plays in ensuring the state's economic prosperity.

In recent years public discussion about economic development and the use of natural resources has become increasingly polarized and unproductive. The forums grew out of the belief that all North Carolinians—businesspeople and environmentalists alike—have a common interest in the long-term health and prosperity of the state, and that by focusing on this shared long-term interest, a public discussion might avoid the acrimony that so often divides us.

Central to the forum discussions were the recommendations of *Horizon 2100*, an inspiring and detailed projection of the quality of life that North Carolinians may enjoy if we take steps now to adopt more aggressive conservation measures.

The *Horizon 2100* vision was created by a panel of the state's leading conservation scientists, through a process convened by the North Carolina office of Environmental Defense. The report has received widespread endorsement from scientists and educators across North Carolina since its publication in June 2003.

Upon reading *Horizon 2100*, staff of Warren Wilson College's Environmental Leadership Center immediately recognized the unique opportunity the report offered to strengthen public dialogue about the state's future. Warren Wilson partnered with Environmental Defense to convene the forums.



Governor Hunt urges North Carolinians to read *Horizon 2100*.

The forums were made possible in collaboration with and with the generous support of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, the Foundation for the Carolinas, Interface, and an anonymous benefactor.

Forum attendees had the opportunity to hear from some of North Carolina's leading statesmen, scientists, academicians, and business and civic leaders. University of North Carolina President Emeritus Bill Friday told the Asheville audience: "It is abundantly clear that discussions like these are urgently needed to set forth a course of action."

Though gratified with the response to the forums, we know that hard work lies ahead. Disarming existing conflicts, stimulating cooperation between old adversaries, identifying diverse new champions, creating innovative solutions, and planning for the future is a challenge we gladly embrace. We look forward to working together with you to ensure a healthy and prosperous life for future North Carolinians.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Orr".

Doug Orr  
President  
Warren Wilson College

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Preyer".

Jane Preyer  
Director  
Environmental Defense, NC

# Keynote speakers set tone

## State leaders inspire forums about the challenges ahead

Holding up a copy of *Horizon 2100*, former Governor Jim Hunt enthusiastically kicked off the forum in Raleigh, saying, “I hope you have the chance to read this thoroughly, and to study it.” Praising the report’s “optimistic, long-term vision,” he emphasized that a clean and healthy environment would be essential to attracting the best, creative businesses that could fuel North Carolina’s future economy.

Hunt set a tone of personal, heartfelt passion that subsequently resounded from Asheville to Greenville when he spoke about our duty to both those who have come before and those who will follow. He spoke of what he learned on “soil conservation Sundays” from his father, and he evoked the aspirations of his granddaughter, Gracie, concluding, “We’re here for our children and grandchildren. We’ve got to look ahead.”

Hunt was one of four of North Carolina’s most distinguished native sons providing energetic and inspiring keynote speeches at the forums. Their comments sparked lively discussions about the state’s long-term future.

In Asheville, University of North Carolina President Emeritus Bill Friday echoed Hunt’s sentiments about *Horizon 2100*, saying “it is a well-integrated, knowledge-based presentation that gives a long-range perspective.”

Friday, who presided over North Carolina’s university system for 30 years as it grew from three to 16 campuses, is widely considered the “leader of leaders” in the state. He came to his point quickly: “Business, industry, agriculture and all of our communities must have clean water. We must have air as pure as possible. We must have mountains and meadows, rivers and streams, and sand dunes if we are to have the quality of life that underpins our democracy.”

Noting “we live in a state undergoing enormous and dramatic change,” Friday observed the need to integrate environmental policies and plans for economic development into a single vision.

“We must make up our minds that we’re going to move toward a policy of intelligent conservation because

Special appreciation goes to the hosts of the forums: Raleigh, Dr. Betsy Bennett, Director, NC Museum of Natural Sciences; Asheville, Dr. Doug Orr, President, Warren Wilson College; Charlotte, Dr. Jim Woodward, Chancellor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Greenville, Dr. Steve Ballard, Chancellor, East Carolina University.

we know now of its great importance to economic development, tourism, agriculture and the quality of life we all aspire to have,” he said.

## Skeptics welcome

In Charlotte, former Governor Jim Martin used a series of slides to depict North Carolina’s rapid population growth over the past 100 years. “Is this growth trend acceptable? Is it inevitable? Do we sustain it, or oppose it, or just accept it?” he asked.

A former chemistry professor, Martin offered provocative insight throughout the afternoon, and challenged people from either side of an issue to work collaboratively. “Let’s all stretch our thinking,” he told the audience.

Martin spoke of the need “to identify the most serious problems that we can do something about, and build bipartisan coalitions to address those issues.”

“You will have your own ideas about all this. You may be skeptical about industry, you may be skeptical about environmentalists—maybe *both*, and that’s okay. This dialogue deserves our best effort,” Martin said.

At the final forum in Greenville, Dr. Jim Leutze, interim director of the North Carolina Progress Board and chancellor emeritus of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, told the audience that the state needs “a new recognition of common interests.

“Polarization, name-calling and stereotyping get us nowhere,” Leutze said. Urging support for the recently adopted Coastal Habitat Protection Plan and maintenance of the Inter-Coastal Waterway, Leutze called for the financial and political commitment to better long-term, environmental stewardship: “It is well past time that we begin to work together, that we begin to see our common interests, and take this long look down the road to where we want to be. We have to have the support of the business community.”

**“These problems can’t be solved by any one group or by one special interest organization. We have to see the necessity of working together.”**

—Dr. Jim Leutze

# Good science informs better policies

## Ecologists demonstrate how aggressive conservation strategies could help realize the vision of a more vital North Carolina

While acknowledging the inevitability of change during the next century—including a much larger population and a changing climate—*Horizon 2100* outlines possible alternative futures for North Carolina. It presents two starkly contrasting images: one, a society and economy that are fed by a naturally healthy and functional environment; the other, a society subjected to the tyranny of a diminished environment and an impoverished human habitat.

The conservation strategies called for in *Horizon 2100* were introduced to forum audiences by two of the state's most eminent ecologists: Dr. William Schlesinger, dean of the Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences at Duke University; and Dr. Charles (Pete) Peterson, professor of biology and marine ecology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

"*Horizon 2100* asks the question: 'What does North Carolina aspire to be in the future?'" Dr. Schlesinger told the Raleigh audience. "What will be the quality of life experienced by our grandchildren? What about the air they breathe, the water they drink, the natural areas they will visit, and the livelihoods that they might gain from the land and sea that surround them?"

"A healthy natural environment provides ecosystem services—abundant clean water and air, fertile soils and productive forests—that benefit us all," Dr. Schlesinger said. By protecting our watersheds, and conserving the landscape—urban and rural, parts human-dominated and parts natural—as a single, integrated and functional eco-

system, "future generations of North Carolinians can experience as healthy a natural environment as we enjoy today."

The *Horizon 2100* plan has gained the endorsement of more than 130 of the state's leading conservation scientists. But to attain this optimistic future, there exists perhaps only a 20-year window of opportunity to set our course. "Knowledge of ecological processes, present trends and projections provides the evidence that urges us to action," Dr. Peterson told the audience in Greenville.

The aggressive conservation advocated in *Horizon 2100* is more than "traditional preservationist ecology." The plan seeks not to recreate the past or to simply preserve the present, but to rebuild and maintain the functional landscapes and watersheds that can naturally and cost-effectively support human society.

"*Horizon 2100* asks us to take the long view," Dr. Petersen said, "because from that perspective economic and environmental health coincide. In short time frames we are often deluded into thinking development that degrades the environment can be good for the economy; but when we consider the longer-term implications, we see that if the environment is degraded, then ultimately the economy will be comparably impoverished as well."



Ruth Shaw, President and CEO, Duke Power, interacts with Dean Bill Schlesinger, Duke University.

# TALKING POINTS

## Business and community leaders share tactics for shaping North Carolina's future

Panelists for the *Horizon 2100* forums were selected for their exemplary business and civic leadership. Representing diverse economic sectors, they nonetheless share the vision presented in *Horizon 2100* and agree that the state's future economic prosperity is inextricably linked to its environmental vitality.

A common theme echoed throughout the forums was the urgent call for improved collaboration among the state's science, environment and business sectors. Panelists recommended that North Carolina move swiftly, given the state's burgeoning growth and very real threats to the quality of life for which North Carolina is renowned.

From their professional viewpoints, panelists described a future that would include financial incentives and entrepreneurial, community-based initiatives to drive new markets for sustainable enterprise. Though their practical suggestions varied, they spoke with one voice, supporting the development of an integrated plan to deploy economic, human, and natural capital toward the cultivation of sustainable regional communities.

### ► On promoting stewardship:

**D. Jordan Whichard III, Chair, North Carolina Economic Development Board and Publisher, *The Greenville Daily Reflector*:** "There are significant parallels between the vision of state economic development leaders and that of *Horizon 2100*. The future economic prosperity of rural North Carolina rests on effective stewardship of resources.

Improvements in communities will attract people to the region who, in turn, will invest in the emerging economy. Regional infrastructures will be required to promote specific sustainable economic development."

**Van Eure, Owner, The Angus Barn:** "We have to make the right decisions now. Everyone should have a 'Life 101' class so that even the youngest citizens can learn that civic responsibility includes stewardship of the environment. Personal choices are a key. Recycling, for example, is something everyone can do, and it does make a difference, especially in large scale operations."

**David Womack, President, Womack Electric:** "We must change the paradigm of conservation in North Carolina. We must dispel the notion that there is a disconnect between stewardship of natural resources and economic development. Since there is not nearly enough money to take advantage of all the conservation opportunities, the conservation community must make the case and be versed in the connectivity between economic growth and conservation."

### ► On creating economic incentives:

**Doug Fowler, Change Consultant, Bank of America:** "The health of our company depends upon the health of the communities in which we do business. The business sector is well positioned to help communities move toward sustainability by identifying and pursuing market-based opportunities. For instance, increasing operational efficiency benefits the environment and the bottom line. For business, this is a viable model."

**Ruth Shaw, President and CEO, Duke Power:** "How do we establish a collective 'us' and take the longer view? Bold



President Bill Friday leads the Asheville discussion.

moves are required to make a difference. For example, we at Duke Energy Corporation and Duke Power Company have openly stated that we favor immediate and mandatory action on carbon... Believe me, that is a bold statement if you run an energy company.”

**Tom Ross, Executive Director, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation:** “All decisions need to be made with attention to the triple bottom line, understanding the environmental, social and economic consequences of our actions. We must all work together, and the Clean Smokestacks Act is an example of what happens when we do. And we must develop incentives now to encourage people to do the right thing.”

### ► *On encouraging sustainable growth:*

**Smedes York, President, York Properties, Inc.:** “The population projections for North Carolina are compelling. Compact development will be required to help respond to the housing needs. Mass transit plans will be required. We must change people’s mindsets to plan for and accommodate this growth and ensure sufficient open space.”

**Becky Anderson, Executive Director, HandMade in America:** “Strong economies and vibrant natural resources are integral to healthy communities. The economic impact of sustainable business derived from these resources is huge and in western North Carolina, equivalent to some of the strongest manufacturing sectors. Be creative, be entrepreneurial, think community!”

**Valeria Lee, Executive Director, Golden LEAF Foundation:** “The importance of economic development decisions crosses all ethnic, racial and social lines. We all must work together to ensure a prosperous future for all the citizens of this state. The revitalization of agriculture in North Carolina is essential to the creation of strong and sustainable communities. In the past, agriculture has provided character and economic benefit to North Carolina and through creative intervention can do so again.”

### ► *On building partnerships:*

**Bill Cobey, former Secretary of NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Consultant (a scheduled panelist who was unable to attend and submitted written comments):** “We need more people who will think about



David Womack, Pete Peterson, and Valeria Lee listen as Jorden Whichard addresses the Greenville audience.

the long-term environmental consequences of each decision. The future welfare of the people of North Carolina is depending on us to provide this far-sighted leadership.”

**Mack Pearsall, Attorney, President of Pearsall Operating Company:** “North Carolina is its environment. The future of this state will be determined by how we manage all of our capital—economic, human and natural. We must build trust between environmentalists and business communities so that we can create a plan to balance economic growth and environmental protection.”

**Todd Mansfield, President and CEO, Crosland, Inc.:** “Inclusive and respectful dialogue is required; without it the environmental community is being politically marginalized. People have tremendous concerns about the path we’re on, but they are not engaging politically. We need to reframe public discussions. I do hope we are in the midst of a shift in ethos wherein green issues are becoming more important. If so, the businesses that anticipate this shift will be more competitive. Economics and market forces can lead to far more conservation progress than pious talk.”

**Jack Cecil, President and CEO, Biltmore Farms, Inc.:** “*Horizon 2100* must be successfully tackled not only statewide but also on a regional basis. We must develop communities that integrate education, healthcare, economic development, arts and culture plus the environment in a mixed use, master plan design. This comprehensive approach to community development will ensure healthy regions across the state which will facilitate a prosperous North Carolina.”

**“The people of North Carolina understand the shared responsibility we have to both a vibrant environment and a thriving economy. Gone are the days of the ‘either/or’ mentality. The people of this state know we can and must do better.”**

—Tom Ross, Executive Director, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, co-convenor and sponsor of the Raleigh forum

# Feedback: the audience engages

The forums received high marks for meeting a fundamental objective: engaging an audience of business and civic leaders in discussions about North Carolina's long-term future.

Half of each two-hour forum was devoted to audience interaction. Stimulated by provocative presentations, audience members enthusiastically shared observations and concerns. Audience members noted potential obstacles and suggested strategies and measures for success. The general tone was one of cautious optimism.

Because the presentations varied at each forum, the four discussions had a slightly different flavor:

- In Raleigh, there was a strong appeal for better environmental education.
- In Asheville, there were several specific suggestions for economic enterprises that would flow from the protection of the region's renewable resources.
- In Charlotte, much of the discussion centered on responding to sprawl and the potential for market-based solutions to the energy dilemma.
- In Greenville, there was considerable comment about the implications of climate change on low-lying coastal lands.

Audiences consistently noted the need for an all-encompassing vision that includes a viable economy and all of the other elements to a good "quality of life." In addition to healthy air and clean water, future North Carolinians deserve reliable health care, affordable housing, better education, more efficient transportation, full and meaningful employment, and accessible energy that is clean and safe.

As one attendee put it, the vision should attend to "the triple-bottom-line in which environmentalists, businessmen or educators can easily recognize 'their' interests." Another noted, "the vision should include a picture of urbanized human communities that are compatible with sustainable natural areas."

## Defining the obstacles

Audience comments clearly reflected the enormity of the challenges. One respondent used the term "silos

**One respondent noted, "the biggest obstacle to achieving the Horizon vision is single-issue advocates."**



In closing the Charlotte gathering, Governor Jim Martin thanked the audience for "giving us the kind of response we had hoped for."

of retreat" to express the fundamental problem of narrow self-interest that many participants suggested as the single greatest obstacle to attaining the vision. Many suggested that such selfishness might yet be overcome through the communication of genuinely shared desires for the future. More than one respondent observed that the greatest problem was "short-term thinking and the idea that economics and environment are opposed."

Funding was seen as a block to implementing the *Horizon 2100* vision. Many noted the challenges of securing adequate funds to achieve conservation objectives. No easy answers were offered to this dilemma, though comments from panelists and audience members urged reliable funding for important initiatives such as Land For Tomorrow and the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan, as positive first steps toward the *Horizon 2100* vision.

Attendees spoke of the need to "galvanize business leadership" behind recognition of "the long term benefits of smart conservation." Suggested venues of approach to foster a new dialogue included chambers of commerce, civic clubs, and regional business organizations. The importance of outreach to minority constituencies was also noted.

Speakers and attendees had the opportunity to continue conversations at receptions following each forum.

**“We all want North Carolina to be prosperous AND healthy—for our people and our communities. We have to work together to make it happen—individuals, business, government and nonprofits—at local, regional and statewide levels. There’s a role for all of us.”** —Pat Smith, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, co-convener in Asheville

## What are the next steps?

### Moving forward through a window of opportunity

David Womack concluded his presentation with a rhetorical question, and a response: “Can conservation effectively coexist in a partnership with economic growth and development in North Carolina? I don’t think that the answer is simply ‘Yes;’ I think that the answer is, ‘It has to!’”

The forums and the ensuing public discourse about our long-term future will encourage all of us to look at things differently, and may well yield novel solutions to what have seemed intractable problems.

Conveners are considering several strategies to build on the forums’ successes and to ensure the dialogue goes forward with trust and respect. Participation by business leaders and entrepreneurs will be critical in identifying new economic opportunities associated with enhanced and functional conservation.

### New partnerships, new primers

At the top of the list is the establishment of a statewide panel to guide implementation of the *Horizon 2100* vision; in fact, several forum participants have already expressed interest in serving in such a capacity. By investing a modest amount of time thinking in a



Chancellor Jim Leutze confers with local business leaders following the Greenville forum.

different, long-term context, such a panel of savvy business and civic leaders could produce some clear directions for jump-starting innovative economic engines.

As a first step, this panel could immediately begin to articulate the many social and business needs that, along with vibrant landscapes and watersheds, are important to our future. In the coming months it may also consider a range of options to implement the *Horizon 2100* vision. Regional conversations will undoubtedly spark the evolution of unique local opportunities as well as statewide projects.

New partners in implementing the *Horizon 2100* vision may emerge, such as the North Carolina Progress Board, the Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences, or the Center for Sustainable Enterprise at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill’s Kenan-Flagler School of Business.

The panel may publish a primer on “Five Ways to Make Your Business Greener;” promote new legislation in the General Assembly; or recommend creating a trust fund for the incubation of sustainable economies.

An audience member in Raleigh suggested promoting a North Carolina version of an AmeriCorps for conservation work.

There may also be opportunities for the panel to carry its conversation to wider audiences through public television and radio.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [www.environmentaldefense.org](http://www.environmentaldefense.org) to view or download *Horizon 2100* in PDF format (Adobe Acrobat Reader required).

Call Environmental Defense at (919) 881-2601 to request a copy of *Horizon 2100* or additional copies of this publication. Email [forum@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:forum@warren-wilson.edu) to share your comments.



# FORUM SPEAKERS

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## RALEIGH

April 21, 2005

### Co-convenor

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

### Host

Betsy M. Bennett, Ph.D., Director, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

### Moderator

The Honorable James B. Hunt, Jr.

### Panelists

Dean William H. Schlesinger, Ph.D.,  
Nicholas School of the Environment and  
Earth Sciences, Duke University

Smedes York, York Properties, Inc.

Van Eure, The Angus Barn

William Cobey, former secretary of DENR

## ASHEVILLE

April 27, 2005

### Co-convenor

Community Foundation of Western North  
Carolina

### Host

President Doug Orr, Ph.D., Warren Wilson  
College

### Moderator

President Emeritus William Friday,  
University of North Carolina

### Panelists

Dean William H. Schlesinger, Ph.D.

John F. A. V. Cecil, Biltmore Farms, Inc.

Becky Anderson, HandMade In America

Mack B. Pearsall, Pearsall Operating  
Company

## CHARLOTTE

May 5, 2005

### Co-convenor

Foundation for the Carolinas

### Host

Chancellor James H. Woodward,  
UNC-Charlotte

### Moderator

The Honorable James G. Martin

### Panelists

Dean William H. Schlesinger, Ph.D.

Ruth G. Shaw, Ph.D., Duke Power Company

Todd Mansfield, Crosland, Inc.

Doug Fowler, Bank of America

## GREENVILLE

May 19, 2005

### Co-convenor

Anonymous Benefactor

### Host

Chancellor Steven Ballard, East Carolina  
University

### Moderator

Chancellor Emeritus James R. Leutze,  
UNC-Wilmington

### Panelists

Charles H. Peterson, Ph.D.,  
UNC-Chapel Hill

Valeria L. Lee, Golden Leaf Foundation

David H. Womack, Womack Electric

D. Jordan Whichard, III, *The Daily Reflector*

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