

## **Karen Cragolin**

### **Side 1:**

Karen is introduced by a club member who had volunteered to help clean up the Cotton Mill (picture enclosed). Karen is the Executive Director of RiverLink. [Elizabeth Kreuger]

[10] The idea of a park has been around for a long time. Riverside Park was very popular before the 1915 fire, which destroyed part of it and the 1916 flood which swept it away.

[25] The city didn't want to deal with the river any more. There was unbridled growth and with new highways cutting through and a busy railway (TVA); people forgot about the river.

[28] In the 70's the Tennessee Valley Authority wanted to dam the river in Transylvania to create hydroelectric power. The citizens formed a defense league and battled this for 5 years.

[35] The Federal Government started looking across the U.S. and found the rivers were polluted and the fish dead. The clean water act was passed (referring to the Republican election she feels this will be repealed). Citizen groups started looking at the river.

[40] The TVA came back in the picture again. They thought the people in WNC didn't like them, so funds were appropriated through Land-of-Sky Regional Council to create access parks. (see Robert Shepherd tape). While this is not fancy, there are now a series of places where people can get on and off the river.

[48] Funds ran out but Land-of-Sky didn't want to see the efforts just die. The French Broad River Foundation, spearheaded by Jean, which included 4 counties, was formed. Quality Forward worked on it, the Chamber of Commerce hired a consultant (see Webb Tape). The question was--how to keep tourists, who had seen the Biltmore House, stay one more day. They all came together and created a demonstration project [train goes by]. [Jean Webb]

[74] Many people were asked what they wanted. People were targeted over 45--a painting won the competition (enclosed). There was a long-term project for kids and a display was produced (enclosed). There were public meetings, brain storming--and the Riverfront Plan was developed.

[90] The editor of the National Geographic filmed the river and an article appeared June 1990 (enclosed). The Greenways for America (enclosed) with a chapter called Rivers Through Cities included plans.

[115] The Riverfront plan has three sections: 1. How to reach it from town. 2. The River itself. 3. River and the whole water shed. A book was created and adopted by the city council (SEE enclosure).

[127] Another charette exploring long range plan design guidelines was published and approved by the council.

[138] It was now time to incorporate. CP&L offered to give a 2-mile section of the river and grants were secured.

[151] On Sept 21 1994 the first part of the project was completed. It was started in West Asheville at the confluence of the French Broad and Swannanoa. Materials and designs that are indigenous and reflect the style of the area were used. A picnic shelter, observation deck, fishing pier were constructed along with a parking lot and asphalt trail for walking and jogging. In time the garden clubs will landscape and plant flowers. The plan is to create centers of activity or "nodes" and join them together.

[187] The down payment on this building (170 Lyman) was a gift from the Janirve Foundation. There are 8 artist studios which, with their rent, pay enough to cover the mortgage and utilities. Therefore, RiverLink has two offices and the conference room free.

[192] The French Broad Foundation and the Preservation Society acquired the Cotton Mill, the most historic building on the river and the Clyde Savings Bank holds the mortgage. Pat Price, an assessor, determined that there was no contamination and title passed in 1993. (Norma Price, Patrick Price)

[215] The Fire of April 2 was a tremendous loss to the community (see enclosure).

[235] It was not possible to get insurance and the personal and financial loss to the artists (who were paying rent which created a cash flow to cover the mortgage) is overwhelming. The building has to come down by next week and one quote on demolition was for \$51,000.

[241] Disposing of hazardous waste will be a problem. Lead paint was used on 122,000 square feet of brick.

[257] This [Karen said with great assurance and courage], is just the beginning. It is an opportunity to redouble efforts. A variety of events focusing on the river will be held in the next several weeks. They will work closely with the Preservation Society. It is unusual to have two organizations come together in a community project. It is important not to lose control of the building code. They don't want another metal building. They will be appealing to Taylor for disaster relief. [Charles Taylor]

[312] There have been three floods since the park was built but, because it was well engineered, there was no damage.

[318] Disposing of the bricks will be a problem. The landfill will be full in two years as it is. Bricks must be separated by hand. The bricks that are contaminated can't be disposed of.

[389] Brochures show Asheville as the "home of the handmade"; the Community will support rebuilding and make the site more wonderful than anyone ever dreamed. There will be a variety of events for River week. Bill Caldwell will be Celebrity Chef at the Market Place, Mitzi and Bill officiate (see Mitzi Tessier tape and Edith Overby re: anchor man Caldwell). [Bill Cecil, Mitzi Tessier, Bill Caldwell]