

Energy Cost-Share Assistance Program **CONNECTING WNC RESOURCES TO CONSERVE WNC RESOURCES**

The Western North Carolina Cost-share Assistance Program (energyCAP) is a partnership of four WNC Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils 501-(c)(3) nonprofits. Blue Ridge RC&D serves Yancey, Mitchell, Avery, Watauga, Ashe, Wilkes, and Alleghany Counties. Each RC&D Council works to connect local business and farm owners of rural Western North Carolina with free guidance, educational resources, and cost-share assistance to fund energy efficiency measures and renewable energy systems for their operations.

A local example of an energyCAP project, located in Yancey County, was at Goldfinch Gardens where the owners applied for funding to install a solar propagation house. Goldfinch Gardens is a diversified market farm, growing produce for area restaurants and also operating as an “online CSA” with 100+ customers who pick-up their orders at the Celo food co-op. Goldfinch Garden is Certified Naturally Grown, which means they follow the USDA National Organic Program standards but participate in a peer to peer inspection regimen. Through one of energyCAP’s cost-share programs they built a passive/active solar greenhouse. The structure is being used to grow transplants and plugs for the farm. The building is a near net-zero energy input propagation house and is heated by trapping the sun’s rays and storing them in thermal mass within the structure. The greenhouse is ventilated passably and by operable vents along the ridgeline that ventilate excess heat. The thermal mass radiates heat back into the greenhouse at night.



Funding from the cost-share program can help with projects such as LED lighting, greenhouse improvements, solar PV systems and other renewable energy systems, energy efficient equipment, and more.

Toe Talk is a monthly article series sponsored by the Toe-Cane Partnership highlighting watershed and community news. The Toe-Cane Partnership is working to improve water quality and gain associated economic benefits in the watershed by providing education and technical resources and implementing on-the-ground projects. For more information, see us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ToeCanePartnership/>

For more information, visit www.energyCAP.org

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