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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Local Organization Serves on State Council:  
ASAP to Advise on Agriculture and Food Systems**

**ASHEVILLE, NC (February 10, 2010)** – Last week, the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council held its inaugural meeting in Raleigh. In the legislation creating the council, the Western North Carolina-based nonprofit Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) was named as an organization to serve among the 27 members. ASAP’s Executive Director Charlie Jackson, member of the council, commented, “I’m proud to be representing ASAP and Western North Carolina, and to work with people around the state to help more farms succeed and more people access fresh, local food.”

The North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council meetings are open to the public, and there was standing room only in the crowd of a hundred or more at the February 2 convening. The council is drawing attention because it will deal with timely issues such as research to investigate the state of agriculture in North Carolina, recommendations on how agencies can better work together, and methods for facilitating a stronger food system and greater food security. During this first meeting, NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler was elected Chair.

The purpose of the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council, according to the legislation, is “to contribute to building a local food economy, thereby benefiting North Carolina by creating jobs, stimulating statewide economic development, circulating money from local food sales within local communities, preserving open space, decreasing the use of fossil fuel and thus reducing carbon emissions, preserving and protecting the natural environment, increasing consumer access to fresh and nutritious foods, and providing greater food security for all North Carolinians.”

State Representative Ray Rapp explained why he introduced the legislation that created the council to the House, “Hundreds of individuals and organizations have worked to establish and support local food economies. [We will] lay out the state’s vision and role to support existing efforts, of which there are many, and to encourage new endeavors and ideas.”

Jackson said, “We’re bringing together people from all different parts of food system and the state to look at how we can make it work better for North Carolinians.” Of the council members, Jackson and Jamie Ager, owner of Hickory Nut Gap Farm (appointed as a representative of sustainable animal producers), are from Western North Carolina.

**ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT**

ASAP is helping to rebuild the local economy, preserve rural land and heritage, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and increase access to fresher, healthier foods. We work to keep farmers farming and to reconnect people with their food. We involve businesses, shoppers, chefs, children, seniors, healthcare providers, teachers, and all community members in the local food movement. ###