



*New Hanover County
Local Watershed Planning Group*

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, April 3, 2002 meeting held at the Cape Fear River Watch.
Summaries available on WECO website: www.ces.ncsu.edu/WECO

**PLEASE NOTE EARLIER MEETING
TIME FOR MAY MEETING!**

**Next meeting scheduled for
Wednesday, May 1 at 5:30 p.m.
Cape Fear River Watch
Educational Center**

Agenda:

- ◆ **Follow up on sites and landowner contacts**
- ◆ **Update on recommendations and plan status**

Group Members/alternates present:

Joe Blair, NC DOT
 Bouty Baldrige, Cape Fear River Watch
 Michael Pope, Sierra Club, Wrightsboro Community
 Dick Loeffert, Northchase Homeowners Association
 Jim Bordeaux, Castle Hayne Steering Committee
 David Mayes, City of Wilmington
 Tommy Tew, Corbett Timber Co.
 Don Cooke, CP & L
 Chris O'Keefe, New Hanover Co. Planning

Support staff & guests present:

Patrick Beggs, WECO/NCSU
 Bonnie Duncan, NC WRP
 Jason Jolley, WECO/NCSU
 Scott McLendon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Scott Logal, Cape Fear Council of Governments

**This summary for the April 3 meeting
includes the following items:**

- ◆ Continuation of Discussion of Goals and Objectives for Watershed Plan
- ◆ Follow-up on Implementation Plan
- ◆ Update on Projects, Grant Applications, Status of Watershed Plans
- ◆ Next Meeting?

Bonnie informed the group that Curt Hensyl had taken another job with IP in Savannah, Georgia and he would no longer be able to participate in the group.

**Continuation of Discussion of Goals and
Objectives for Watershed Plan**

Goal for Flooding:

Reduce Flooding & Flooding Impacts

Objectives:

- **Decrease stormwater runoff and improve the quality of runoff**
- **Reduce damage to personal property and ensure public safety**

The group had no other additions or suggestions related to goals for flooding, but did agree that supporting the Wilmington Watershed Protection Roundtable Report would support these goals. The group agreed that a letter should be written from the group to New Hanover County in support of this report. Up to now, New Hanover County has not endorsed this report for implementation. In addition, an EPA Cooperative Grant proposal has been submitted to implement some BMP projects which may address some of the outlined stormwater flooding concerns. The group agreed that there were not additional actions they wanted to take to address the second objective beyond those actions already mentioned.

Goal for Growth and Development:

To Guide growth

Objectives:

- Encourage responsible government involvement and enforcement

- Encourage and educate developers to make personal commitments to self-enforce regulations

Stakeholders suggested that the group could begin supporting goals for growth and development by supporting the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Question: Does the UDO apply to the city or the county?

A: It applies to them both by unifying their development ordinances.

Comments:

- *We should be careful in making recommendations related to growth and development, because that affects people's property values.*
- *Lots of infrastructure projects are routine and take place without public input. Sometimes the full range of BMPs are not used and public input would be helpful. One example of this is the replacement of outdated sewer lines.*

Bonnie suggested tracking opportunities for public comment periods related to DOT to gain more participation at that level. Stakeholders noted that people fail to turn out for public comment unless it is a contentious issue.

It was suggested that we educate and encourage developers to self-enforce regulations with appropriate BMPs, development standards and actions that help water quality. It was also noted that developers respond to incentives and many problems related to routine infrastructure may come from subcontractors.

It was noted that sometimes a state entity prevents developers from pursuing more innovative options and there should be allowances for this. For example, developers may use a traditional wet detention pond rather than other BMPs because of the red tape associated with other BMPs. The state also does not allow stormwater recharge to groundwater and this is allowed in Florida.

It was suggested that the Wilmington/Cape Fear Homebuilders Association-Land Use Council would be a good place to start discussing where improvements can be made via recommendations from the group.

ACTION ITEM: WECO and NC WRP will conduct research and develop ideas where improvements could be made. Tommy will approach the Land Use Council to ask if they would be receptive or have suggestions. NC WRP and WECO may want to meet with the Land Use Council.

WECO will then draft a letter for the New Hanover County Local Watershed Advisory Group to consider submitting to the Environmental Management Commission, possibly in conjunction with the Wilmington/Cape Fear Homebuilders-Land Use Council to encourage the state to be more flexible in BMPs guidelines and other development measures.

Some stakeholders noted that developers are aware of pitfalls associated with development rules, but possibly not aware of all the options available. These concerns have also been referenced in the Wilmington Watershed Protection Roundtable Report.

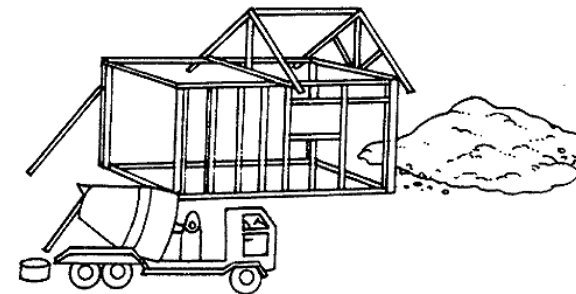
Support for Wilmington Watershed Protection Roundtable Report

Bonnie informed the group that one option for supporting growth and development goals is to send a letter of support to the New Hanover County Commissioners encouraging them to support the Wilmington Watershed Protection Roundtable Report. Patrick Beggs read a letter Bonnie drafted to the Assistant County Manager on behalf of the group.

Some stakeholders expressed concern that not all members were aware of the roundtable because they had been absent. It was suggested we send them a copy of the revised letter of support for comment prior to submitting it to the County. (A copy of the Wilmington Watershed Protection Roundtable was sent to members absent from recent meetings).

Questions: Are any of these growth and development suggestions covered under Governor Hunt's Smart Growth Initiative or Million Acres Initiative?

Answer: Bonnie: Some of it may be covered in a general manner, but nothing specific.



Goal for Wildlife:

Preserve Wildlife Habitat

Objectives:

- **Maintain continuity and connectivity of habitat**
- **Identify areas of important habitat and strive to protect these areas**

Bonnie noted that the group and WRP have identified areas where they wish to consider preservation, i.e. the Sledge property, and Angola Bay. These opportunities may take longer than expected to pursue at this point. The preservation component of WRP's budget has been cut this year due to budgetary constraints, but WRP hopes to work toward making progress on these tracts in the future. If WRP can not work toward preserving these sites, the WRP will explore and support other funding options for potentially preserving these sites.

Question: What is the nature conservancy plan? Are they going to restore Angola Bay?

A: The Nature Conservancy is in the process of acquiring both Angola Bay and Bear Gardens from International Paper. There could be some restoration opportunities at Angola Bay, via plugging the ditches. This is good since Angola Bay was the group's second top choice for pursuing preservation. Although Angola Bay is outside our Local Watershed boundaries, it does form the headwaters of the Northeast Cape Fear River.

Although Angola Bay and the Sledge Property were our top two choices for potential preservation, Bouty commented that informal monitoring suggests that wildlife has returned to the Kerr Avenue site – which happens to be a small urban site. One suggestion was to use Cape Fear Riverwatch interns to develop a baseline wildlife inventory form and then to monitor sites for wildlife after restoration has occurred. Then you could create an inventory and monitor and evaluate how successful projects were with regard to wildlife habitat. It could also assist in addressing connectivity where wildlife has returned.

Bonnie noted that connectivity was a lead factor in the need to have large tracts for preservation.



Goals for Water Quality (cont. from the March Mtg.)

The group revisited their discussion regarding the objective to reduce fecal coliform inputs from the previous meeting. Some ideas the group proposed to address this goal included education through:

- Posting flyers at local stores, such as PetSmart
- Mailing educational information to registered pet owners
- Using fact sheets developed by the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

Dave Mayes provided clarification from last month's meeting. He informed the group that you can dispose of pet waste in household trash, as long as it is sealed in a plastic bag. Pet owners should not bury waste in the ground. In City parks, pet owners must clean up pet waste. The City is considering requiring pet waste clean up in the right of way and installing more pet waste receptacles.

The Greenfield Lake group Dave is working with has police participation and is working to get the police involved and ensuring pet owners are aware of the City ordinance regarding pet waste. It has been noted that the ordinance is difficult to enforce and the judges often throw the cases out of the courts, because they are viewed as unimportant relative to other legal cases.

It was also noted that pet waste should not be disposed of in the toilet because the sewage treatment plant is not equipped to handle and treat all the bacteria that is present in pet waste.

Question: What does City do with pet waste in disposal containers at the park?

A: Dave: They take it to the landfill.

Question: What percentage of fecal comes from public lands vs. private lands?

A: Dave: I am not sure. You do notice pet waste on public lands. One apartment complex has a pet waste program.

Question: What is the success of the Wrightsville Beach code?

A: Dave: What they did is good, but it is difficult to enforce.

Q: Should we approach homeowners?

A: Dave: I can provide the group with recommendations that came out of the Greenfield Lake group, if you would like to consider those first. The group agreed to hear these recommendations.

Comments:

- *People are allowed to have dog pens in the downtown area*
- *We need adequate buffers*
- *Buffers do not address fecal coliform and are often short circuited by pipes*
- *Maybe local governments can chlorinate ponds to a level to kill fecal coliform and not harm fish and aquatic life*
- *Aquatic life and fish are very sensitive to chlorinating.*

DECISION: The group decided to make recommendations in the near future and present these recommendations to the Council of Neighborhoods Association.



Update on Implementation

Bonnie informed the group that she had received some responses from landowners in Burnt Mill and at least one inquiry from Lower Smith Creek. Unfortunately, many of the contacts for the mailing are either deceased or no longer live there. It is important for stakeholders to contact and follow-up with landowners, so that they can gauge landowner interest and have landowners sign the site proposal form allowing WRP access to their land for a more in-depth assessment on suitability for restoration. If WRP receives enough responses from a cluster of individuals located in a neighborhood, they may hold a public meeting. A public meeting is looking like an option to pursue for the Burnt Mill Creek stream restoration Project.

Bonnie asked for assistance from group members in contacting landowners where she was having difficulty.

Burnt Mill Creek

There were concerns that many folks in certain areas of Burnt Mill Creek may be renters. Bouty, Don, and Dave will work to cover Burnt Mill Creek. Bonnie and Larry will be looking at property in the

near future and could possibly hold a meeting with landowners in May.

Don Cooke volunteered to hand deliver the landowner letter and reply postcards to folks located on the North side of Wayne Drive parallel to Burnt Mill Creek. This individuals are not located in the 3000 linear feet stream segment identified by KCI for restoration, but their land is still a possibility and could provide access for assessment.

Lower Smith Creek

Dave Mayes volunteered to contact Jabe Hardee and work through Jabe to contact Bruce Cameron concerning property he owns along Maides Park in Lower Smith Creek

Dave Mayes will follow up with landowners in Maides Park that have previously contacted by the City concerning an easement.

Some concern was expressed by group members that WRP should avoid the cemetery (LSRO703) as a restoration site. Concern was expressed that it would be difficult to contact property owners and should be avoided as a site if other options were available.

Tommy informed the group he had replied to Bonnie granting access to the Corbett property for assessing potential for restoration at LSWRO-5. Some concern was expressed that LSWRO-5 had previously been disregarded because it was not suitable. Bonnie informed the group that Larry would reassess the suitability of the site for restoration before further landowner contacts were made.

Prince George's Creek

Bonnie mentioned that there were three more wetlands restoration sites the WRP wanted to investigate for wetlands restoration. Larry will be evaluating these sites from the road next week. Landowner letters for these potential sites have not been sent. In the event that any of these sites are viable, Bonnie asked for assistance from the stakeholders in making landowner contacts. One landowner is Burton Steel. Jim Bordeaux volunteered to contact Burton Steel and provide them with a letter and reply postcard.

Tommy volunteered to provide a letter to the other property owner, Trask. Chris O'Keefe and Michael Pope also agreed to assist with landowner contacts if necessary.

Update on Projects

Bonnie informed the group that the Cape Fear River Assembly was working to apply for a Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant and 319 Funds to assist with implementing BMPs identified in the Local Watershed Plans developed for the Cape Fear River Basin. The NCWRP is working to support this effort by providing a match for the grant applications.

Bonnie and Chris O'Keefe worked to develop an EPA grant proposal for \$150,000 for implementation of at least two BMPs. This money can be applied within a watershed which contains a 303(d) listed stream.

It was also noted that WECO is working on compiling a draft watershed plan based on the group's work and this will be presented at a future meeting.

Question: What is a feasible project size for these grants? Why can we not afford to do a project at Northchase at this time?

Answer: Bonnie: The state exhausted resources the WRP had for implementing these types of projects. If the grant proposal Bonnie and Chris submitted is accepted, it may provide some of the resources needed to implement this project – however all identified BMP project opportunities will also be considered. The grant total would only be \$150,000 and would pay for monitoring, landowner contacts, and design and implementation of the BMPs. For the proposal we estimated roughly \$50,000 per BMP. At least 2 BMPs could be constructed for this cost. Northchase will be evaluated and considered along with other projects if the grant money is approved.

Next meeting:

Decision: The group elected to start the May 1 meeting one hour early. The May 1 meeting will begin at 5:30pm and should only last approximately one hour.

For more information about the New Hanover County Local Watershed Planning Group, or to be removed from this mailing list, contact Christy Perrin or Jason Jolley at (919)515-4542
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