



New Hanover County  
Local Watershed Planning Group

## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, December 5, 2001 meeting held at the Cape Fear River Watch.  
Summaries available on WECO website: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/WECO](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/WECO)

**Please Note that the January Meeting Date  
has changed:**

**Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday,  
January 16 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm Cape Fear  
River Watch  
Educational Center**

### Agenda:

- ◆ Continued review of potential project sites
- ◆ NCWRP and the group will determine where to hand-deliver landowner letters
- ◆ Setting the group's agenda for 2002!!

#### Group Members/alternates present:

Joe Blair, NC DOT  
Jim Bordeaux, Castle Hayne Steering Committee  
Jabe Hardee, Cameron Company  
Stacy Smaltz/Bouty Baldrige, Cape Fear River Watch  
Michael Pope, Sierra Club, Wrightsboro Community  
Dick Loeffert, Northchase HOA  
Don Cooke, CP&L  
Curt Hensyl, Local watershed resident/ International Paper  
Tommy Tew, Corbett Timber Co.  
Bouty Baldrige, Cape Fear River Watch  
David Mayes, City of Wilmington

#### Support staff & guests present:

Christy Perrin, WECO/NCSU  
Bonnie Duncan, NC WRP  
Danielle Seneschal, Cape Fear River Watch

#### Members Absent

Marian McPhaul, UNCW  
Chris O'Keefe, New Hanover Co. Planning

### Final Discussion of Landowner letter

The Group approved the revised version of the letter that was developed by Bonnie to be sent to landowners to inform them of potential restoration opportunities.

Stacy and Don volunteered to hand-deliver the letters in their own neighborhoods (in the Burnt Mill Creek subcatchment) as a "trial run".

**Decision: The NCWRP will help the group to determine in which areas to deliver the letters at the next meeting.**

### Discussion of Preservation Opportunities

Bonnie Duncan led the group in a discussion about potential land preservation opportunities in the watershed. She referred back to presentations made by Bruce Watkins and Camilla Herlevich with the N.C. Coastal Land Trust (NCCLT). The group was again provided with the NCCLT's *Property Evaluation Protocol*. This protocol outlines how the Land Trust evaluates properties as potential preservation opportunities, by evaluating such attributes as follows;

- ⇒ Quality of riparian areas
- ⇒ Presence of natural heritage communities
- ⇒ Natural Heritage elements (such as endangered species and habitats)
- ⇒ Historical properties
- ⇒ Wetland mitigation
- ⇒ Other attributes including farmland, scenic value, location in relation to other preserved properties, etc...

Based on this protocol, the NCCLT has identified as a priority the protection of riparian areas along the Northeast Cape Fear River. Bonnie shared with the group two recommendations for preservation in this area based upon the NCCLT's priorities and the issues of concern voiced by the New Hanover Local

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Watershed Planning Group.

The first area is a forest of 23,000 acres that is located in the northwest corner of New Hanover County, west of Castle Hayne and northwest of Wrightsboro, and bounded on the west, north, and northeast by the Northeast Cape Fear River, and on the east by Prince George Creek. The second area is the Angola Bay/Bear Gardens tract, which is located in Pender County east of I-40 and encompasses the headwaters for the Northeast Cape Fear River. The Nature Conservancy is currently acquiring the second area, and may come later to the NC Wetlands Restoration Program if there is potential for their help.

The remainder of the discussion focused upon the forest in New Hanover County.

Questions:

Q: *Would the NC Coastal Land Trust take care of the arrangements or would we be involved?*

A: The NCWRP has a fund to implement projects for non-mitigated historical impacts and could potentially fund a portion of this project. Clean Water Management Trust Fund could be another option. We would like to pursue having Bruce Watkins (NCCLT) handle landowner interactions. He is the local expert on preservation and working with landowners in this particular area.

Q: *How does land preservation fit into our project?*

A: Referring to our "string of pearls" concept where multiple projects yield bigger environmental benefits, we need to look at multiple improvement and protection options, including preservation. This could be the best preservation opportunity to protect water quality and wildlife habitat within our Local Watershed.

Up to this point we've really been focusing on water quality improvement opportunities. We have focused on water quality goals most and more recently in order to provide input to the watershed assessment and potential project opportunities KCI has proposed. KCI's contract ends this month and we wanted to ensure your input was a part of their work. We will soon need to step back and look at the big picture of the watershed again and the other issues you identified as important to you within the local watershed (i.e. growth and development, wildlife habitat, etc.).

Some Comments:

⇒ *Some of the property has high bluff riverfront property that will be valuable for development-*

*expensive.*

- ⇒ *Old growth Juniper and cypress will not be developed since it will be too wet. It could be logged however, so the highest value use would be timber sales. We have a fiduciary responsibility to use state money wisely and understand what can be gained from preserving this property. We want bang for the buck.*
- ⇒ *This is optimal land for Forest Legacy program, which could meet some concerns about spending money wisely. This could keep people away.*
- ⇒ *This is a natural heritage site with wildlife habitat.*
- ⇒ *Cameron and Corbett owns some property west of site.*
- ⇒ *Purchasing upland properties would accomplish protection goals. Lowlands will function regardless of purchase sites.*
- ⇒ *Would be good to protect stream corridor.*

In summary, the group briefly discussed some of the pros and cons of different management strategies of the property. Bonnie mentioned that at this point in time they do not even know if the landowner would be interested in pursuing *any* preservation strategies, so the first step would be to initiate landowner contact.

**Decision: Group agreed NCWRP (or NCCLT) should move forward with contacting the landowner to explore the feasibility of developing a conservation scenario for the Sledge Property. They do not feel comfortable recommending a preservation strategy without more information.**

**Points to Ponder from Bonnie:**

Ultimately, this may be a "focus area" the group would recommend for protection because of its identified unique values. The specific preservation strategy and management applications on the Sledge property may indeed be best prescribed by the landowner herself. With the landowner's permission, the group may decide to provide guidance on a protection strategy and potential funding opportunities in line with the landowner's long term goals and interests for the property.

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## Restoration Opportunities Review

Presented by Bonnie Duncan, NCWRP

The group continued to review the prioritized restoration opportunities that Joe Pfeiffer and KCI listed by subcatchment. They provided input on the sites based on their knowledge of the areas.

Each site is listed by the subcatchment- PG for Prince George, then by the type of proposed project, for example BMP for best management practice, SRO for stream restoration opportunity, and WRO for wetland restoration opportunity.

### Prince George's Creek

#### PGBMPRO-1 Wet detention basin near urban stream west of I-40

Question: Where does bypass overlay?

Glen Eden, Ravenwood are north of bypass.

Question: Is this right on top of bypass?

No

Comments:

- *Would be retrofits of ponds*
- *Ponds probably designed for 1-inch storms- would not help much for flooding*
- *Good project*

#### PGBMPRO-2 Proposal wet detention stream west of BMPRO-1

Question: Is it DOT property?

No

Question: Do we need to get in touch with all landowners?

Yes, but we wouldn't necessarily need permanent easements.

Comments:

- *Ditch-roadway would be a DOT right-of-way (130 ft. right-of-way)*
- *Nothing in TIP for widening 132*
- *Not likely much you could do*

#### PGWRO-12 Agriculture field east of Blue Clay Road and railroad tracks.

Comments:

- *Bypass should have been considered by KCI. It runs through part of the site.*
- *Good opportunity to mitigate impacts from bypass*
- *Some county folks are proposing interchange at Blue Clay Road.*

#### PGWRO-5 Wetlands restoration of 115 acre agricultural field with hydric soils

Comments:

- *DOT approached landowner about buying property for mitigation. Landowner refused, but will likely talk if money is involved.*
- *Family owned farm*
- *Will bottomland hardwoods grow there?*

#### PGSRO-1401 stream restoration under Sidbury Road before joining Prince George's Creek.

Comments:

- *Sounds like it is viable*
- *Why is a stream restoration worth the money?*
- *Restoration puts it in its natural state*

#### PGWRO-1 Wetlands restoration next to Fulton Avenue.

Comments:

- *Could be a 6-month old clear cut*
- *May be a possibility if it is ditched*
- *Hardwoods would naturally regenerate*

Question: Is drainage there? Is this a creation of a wetland?

No

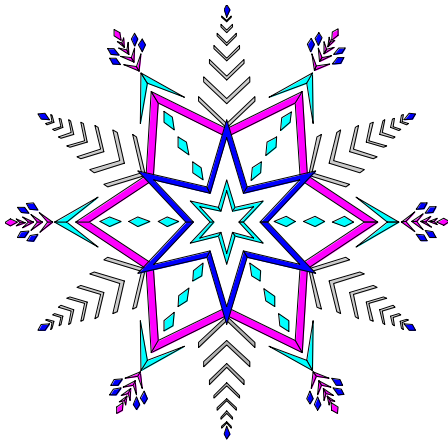
#### PGSRO-1201 stream restoration project

Comments:

- *Buster Buck's land, his children own*
- *Could be a possibility*

**Lower Smith Creek Project Suggestion**  
**by Bouty Baldrige**

Bouty informed the group that the City of Wilmington has a plan to upgrade the Northside wastewater treatment plant, which is located in the Lower Smith Creek subcatchment. Currently public meetings are being held to gather feedback about the project, and consultants are conducting an Environmental Assessment. Bouty suggested that this could be a good potential site for a constructed wetland for treating wastewater, and suggested that expressing interest in it might convince the consultants and the city to explore the option.



Wishing you a  
joyous  
Holiday Season

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