

the TICK TIMES

Tick Creek Watershed and Rocky River EPA Project News

November 2009

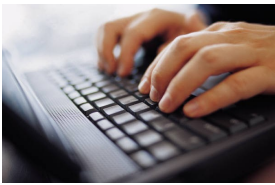
NEXT TICK CREEK
MEETING IS TUESDAY,
DEC. 8

10:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M

Chatham Agricultural Building,
Pittsboro. Snacks provided.

Meeting objectives are to:

- Learn about biological survey results
- See GIS analysis results
- Discuss priorities for restoration projects & BMPs
- Share activities you are working on

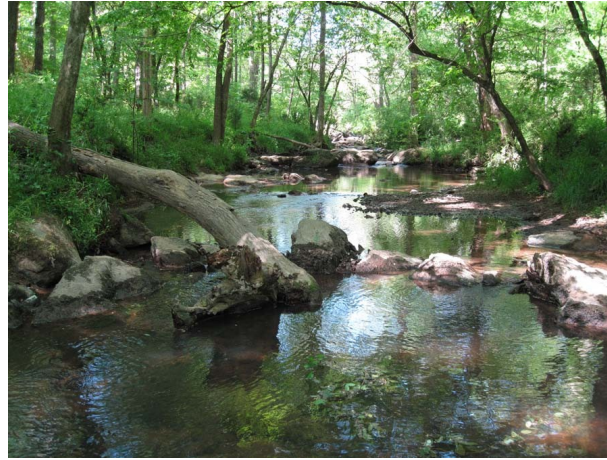


MANY WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

For announcements by email send your email address to Christy_perrin@ncsu.edu or call Christy Perrin at (919) 515-4542 to receive paper copies.

Tick Creek Watershed meetings are open to the public- feel free to join us! We meet as needed- meetings are announced on the listserve. All documents will be posted on the project website:

www.ncsu.edu/weco



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Welcome to our first newsletter!

The *Tick Times* will provide updates on the collaborative effort to improve conditions in the Tick Creek watershed, and partners' water quality efforts in the larger Rocky River watershed (Tick Creek drains into the Rocky River). We'll kick this off by including an overview of this project and goals, then summarizing activities and progress made so far.

A Quick History

A group of partners, including NC State University, Chatham County, Rocky River Heritage Foundation, Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District, and Chatham Extension, applied for a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to work on removing Tick Creek from the EPA's list of impaired waters. Impaired waters do not meet their intended uses- for Tick Creek that is supporting biological life, and supporting human contact. The grant also specifies taking actions to improve collaborative planning for the Rocky River.

The first activity of the grant coordinators, Watershed Education for Communities and Officials, NCSU, was to conduct a *situation assessment*. Staff interviewed representatives of stakeholder groups in the Rocky River and Tick Creek Watersheds to better understand their interests on issues concerning land and water uses, and to design a process that may meet those interests. The resulting Situation Assessment Report is online at the project website.

The biggest take home message: people want to work together on a smaller sized "bite" than the Rocky River, in order to build good will and create collaborative success stories. So this voluntary group now has a unique Tick Creek focus. Since the grant was received in early 2009, the partnership has grown to include others such as the Triangle Land Conservancy, NC Division of Water Quality, Piedmont Conservation Council, and interested citizens. All are welcome!

Setting a Vision for Tick Creek Watershed

Learning about Tick Creek – views and interests

A number of activities provided information that was used to create a vision for Tick Creek watershed with goals (outcomes) and objectives. These included:

1. The EPA project team responded to the following questions regarding the Rocky River watershed & Tick Creek watersheds at a kick-off meeting:
 - What are the ultimate outcomes that we need?
 - What are the threats to achieving each of those?
 - What are the assets to help us achieve each?

The raw results from these questions are provided on the project website. The group also came up with some strategies for working towards outcomes.

2. The Situation Assessment involved interviews with twenty eight (28) stakeholders representing a cross-section of interests including residents, developers, businesses, non-profits, and government staff. Feedback from stakeholders helped develop the goals for this project.
3. The Tick Creek watershed group met in September 2009 to review and clarify the proposed goals, objectives, and strategies.

The resulting document is called a “logic model”. A logic model is a strategic plan for the project. This helps to ensure that actions taken by the partnership will be working towards the agreed-upon outcomes by the group. The outcomes, objectives, and strategies included in the logic model are shared on the following pages.

The logic model for this project is a dynamic document that can and will change as new information is gathered.



Mount Vernon Springs

Learning about Tick Creek- scientific & technical information

Improving Tick Creek requires learning more about it to determine how to apply actions that will improve its conditions. The project team has been compiling and summarizing existing data about Tick Creek. Also, a biological survey has been conducted on Tick Creek to learn what types of aquatic life make their homes there.

Project team members have conducted the following activities for collecting and analyzing scientific and technical information:

- Alderman Environmental surveyed Tick Creek for mussels, snails, and crayfish
- Raj Butalia has created a geodatabase for mapping and analysis of land use and other geographically referenced data
- Agricultural professionals have provided information to create a GIS layer of existing best management practices in the watershed
- The NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program’s data & information on Tick Creek is being summarized

Logic Model for EPA Tick Creek Watershed/Rocky River Project

(outcomes and objectives that apply to Tick Creek are shaded)

Outcomes	Med-term outcomes	Objectives
Wildlife habitat protected for aquatic & terrestrial species	Riparian corridors protected/restored	Natural areas that provide water quality benefits are protected
Water quality supports good benthic macro-invertebrate diversity & fish diversity (Tick Creek off 303(d) list of impaired waters)	Water quality protected for aquatic species (reduce sediment, other parameters as needed)	Landowners use best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture and development (including cattle exclusion, low impact development)
		Implement stream stabilization & restoration, wetland restoration projects
Farm & cultural heritage protected	Agricultural and forestry land preserved	
	Agricultural and silviculture businesses are viable	Urban & industrial landowners maintain septic systems & manage stormwater runoff
	Agritourism is promoted	Local markets for agricultural products supported
Water quantity needs are met	Drinking water supplies are adequate	Increased water conservation
	Irrigation, livestock, & business water supply needs are met	Water supply for irrigation & livestock available
	Base flows are increased	
Recreation and learning opportunities created	Create public park on Rocky River.	
	Reduced algal blooms in Tick & Rocky	
Ecotourism is thriving	Hiking and birding trails along river	

Strategies stakeholders have suggested for achieving Tick Creek objectives:

- Identify & involve landowners
 - Use targeted outreach for different groups
 - Build trust among communities
 - Build support for protecting rivers
 - Establish dialogue with landowners
 - Involve agricultural community in identifying how they can want to be involved
 - Audiences: officials, landowners, landscapers, contractors, schools, developers
 - Education topics: economic and ecological values of preserved land, water conservation, and a natural hydrological balance
 - Educate with positive focus
 - Use schools for BMP sites
- Improve coordination with groups & plans, share data
- Identify sources of pollution, runoff
- Identify best available data
- Collect data to fill in gaps
 - Aquatic taxa survey of Tick Creek
 - Develop Tick Creek geodatabase
 - Identify Tick Creek existing BMPs
 - Identify land uses in Tick Creek
 - Identify monitoring needs for Tick Creek
- Prioritize restoration, preservation, BMP opportunities using agreed-upon criteria
 - Implement urban stormwater retrofit BMP in Siler City
 - Use schools for BMP sites
 - Find funding to implement restoration, bmps, preservation
- Provide incentives for mixed forests
- Improve enforcement of regulations to protect water quality, or improve regulations
 - Consider development goals for watershed

Partner projects in the Rocky River

Many overlapping activities are underway within the Rocky River watershed. Stakeholders suggested that we increase coordination and information sharing about the various efforts, to reduce confusion and improve collaboration. Here is some information about other efforts:

Triangle Land Conservancy and Rocky River Heritage Foundation received a NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant to work with landowners to assess and prioritize lands on the Rocky River for volunteer conservation efforts. Contact Leigh Ann Cienek for information at: lcienek@tlc-nc.org or 919.833.3662

Rocky River Heritage Foundation hosts an annual high school fair, will soon host tours of the Rocky River, and supports monitoring efforts on the Rocky River. www.rockyriverchatham.org/aboutrrhf.html

The Chatham Conservation Partnership is developing a comprehensive conservation plan for Chatham County. For more information visit their site on Wiki spaces – on the lower left side of the page is a link for upcoming meetings. <http://chathamconservation.wikispaces.com>

We will post these links on our project website. Please send us information on your organizations' efforts in the Rocky River watershed if you would like those posted, too.

September Tick Creek Meeting Roster

Patrick Beggs, NCSU WECO
Bill Causey, Rocky River Heritage Foundation
Leigh Ann Cienek, Triangle Land Conservancy
Al Cooke, Cooperative Ext.-Chatham County
Nora Deamer, NC Division Water Quality
Julie Elmore, Piedmont Conservation Council
Benjamin Howell, Chatham County Planning
Christy Perrin, NCSU WECO
Fred Royal, Chatham County Env. Resources
Mike Shaffer, NCSU Dept. BAE
Jason Sullivan, Chatham Co. Planning
Cynthia Van DerWiele, Chatham County
Allison Weakley, RJG&A
Brenda Williams, Chatham SWCD
Ken & Roz Winter, landowners

Public outreach and engagement

The Tick Creek Watershed group in Sept. discussed ideas for engaging with landowners. Suggestions included reaching out to engage corporate landowners in storm-water management projects, working with individual companies' corporate relations staff. Specific companies mentioned were Mt. Airy poultry, Pallet One, and Townsend. Other potential audiences included civic groups like Rotary, the Livestock Association, the agri-business council, and Chamber of Commerce.

A public meeting or workshop was suggested. To make the most of everyone's time, the meeting could also provide information about Triangle Land Conservancy and farmland protection project opportunities. WECO staff and partners will explore these options, aiming for a public workshop in early 2010.

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