



# The Ellerbe Creek Journal

News from the Watershed  
Winter 2007

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[www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org)

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## Earthday 2007 Saturday April 21

Kim Curtis



There are several things to choose from if you'd like to spend Earthday at Ellerbe Creek. ECWA will meet at the kiosk at Green St. near our Pearl Mill Preserve where we will break into teams. The first team will go up and down the east branch of the Ellerbe looking for the very aggressive garlic mustard, which, so far as we know, has taken hold only there. Garlic mustard is extremely invasive, emitting a poison that kills other plants. If you have seen the way it has taken over in New England, you know how scary it is. It should be blossoming beautifully by Earthday and will be readily identifiable. We'll have bags, gloves and waders for this crucial effort.

The second team will do trash which is, once again, plaguing the Ellerbe.

Friends of South Ellerbe (FOSEC) will be working with the city to organize a clean up at Walltown Park on the West branch of the Ellerbe. This park is getting a lot of attention with the new neighborhood recreation center going in, so it's a great time to pitch in.

Both events will start in the morning. For time and more details on both events, visit our website [www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org).

## National River Cleanup Week June 2

Joanne Abel

Join the good folks at Frog Hollow for 2007's National River Cleanup Week on Saturday, June 2. For 15 years, over 500,000 volunteers have participated in over 4,500 cleanups across the country, collecting over 1,000 tons of litter and debris from American's rivers and streams as part of the National River Cleanup Week. This year Frog Hollow will have conducted 30 free on-water clean ups.

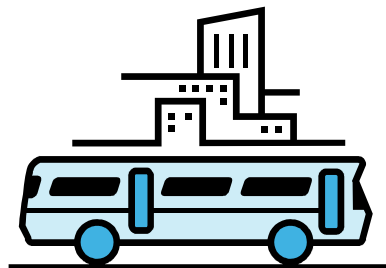
We will work on the huge trash flotilla that collects where Ellerbe Creek flows into the Falls Lake. This has to be seen to be believed! Among the litter that has floated down the creek you will find hundreds of balls: golf balls, soccer balls, footballs, beach balls, but mostly basketballs--not surprising for the triangle. The Ellerbe Creek Valley is lovely just before the trash flotilla, so come see this lower part of the river and help clean it up. Great Outdoor Provisions will have some treats for some lucky folks too!

Register by e-mailing [info@froghollowoutdoors.com](mailto:info@froghollowoutdoors.com) or call 949-4315. Space is limited so please register if you are committed to coming. Please send you name, the number of people in your party, a phone number. Let them know if you want space in one of Frog Hollow's boats or are planning in bringing your own.

## Tour the Watershed in Bio-diesel Bus May 5

Larry Brockman

Be one of 15 people to take a tour of the Ellerbe Creek watershed via Frank Ferrell's mini bio-diesel bus. The Tour is scheduled for Saturday May 5 (9 am – 1 PM) and will include: a visit to all three of ECWA's Nature Preserves; travel to the upper watershed to point out key parcels of land ECWA would like to preserve; a stop over at the massive beaver wetland ECWA is working to protect and a hike to the heron rookery. Frank, who owns the bio bus and the Ninth Street Bakery is not only donating the cost of the bus but also is providing coffee and pastries for 15 people. This is a small fund-raiser for ECWA and therefore, there is a recommended donation of \$10 dollars/person (Business sponsors ride free). ECWA members will be given priority, otherwise first come first serve. Contact Larry Brockman ([larry@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:larry@ellerbecreek.org)) by April 30, if you would like to reserve a seat. To check out the bio bus and possibly rent it out for your own event, go to <http://www.gaiabiobus.com/index.html>.



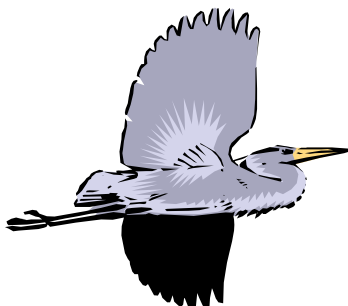
## ***Save the Date!!***

### **ECWA Spring Party and Auction**

Wine, soft drinks, heavy hors d'oeuvres, good company  
and lots of great items, services and artwork.

**Friday May 18, 2007 6-9 pm.  
2122 Edwin St., Durham, NC**

(More details including directions will be sent later this month)



### **Glennstone Nature Preserve Trails are Ready for You**

Larry Brockman

If you have not hiked the Glennstone Nature Preserve trails recently or have never hiked them this is a great time to do so. The trails are in great shape with newly installed signs thanks to a group of 20 volunteers who, on March 24, cleared some of the old trails, built a new one and installed new signs that will help you navigate the trail network. Most of the volunteers were youth from Immaculate Conception Church but we had several ECWA members and Glennstone residents helping also. Go to the ECWA home page ([www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org)) for directions to Glennstone and to the "Maps" section to print out a map of the Preserve. We recently installed a kiosk at the storm water wetland pond, where you can also pick up a map.

### **Memorial Day Nature/Bird Walk to Heron Rookery**

Larry Brockman

Like last year ECWA is sponsoring a nature/bird walk on Memorial Day at the Glennstone Nature Preserve. The walk will begin at 7:30 am and will last a couple hours. Although the details are not worked out yet we will likely have an expert birder and native plant specialist to guide our walk to help identify birds and native flora. We will walk through the Preserve and out to a near by heron rookery (nesting area) where there are over 50 great blue herons nesting - this is an incredible site and one of largest heron rookeries in the state. Bring binoculars. Look for more details on the ECWA listserv and website ([www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org)) in the month of May.

# Ellerbe Creek Watershed to get a New Dog Park

Diana Davis

Durham Parks and Recreation is in the process of creating a new dog park in Northgate Park. The Jaycee Park portion off Lavender Avenue used to have a small softball field; the field was too small, even T-ball batters were routinely hitting over the fence, often into nearby Ellerbe Creek. The decision was made to convert the location into a dog park.

The old field has been refitted for large dogs to play off-leash and a new area has been fenced for smaller dogs, both with double door entries to prevent escapes. The city is providing bags and trashcans for dog waste pick-up.

The park will be open soon; the date has yet to be determined as it depends on how quickly the grass becomes established. The predicted date is May or June.

ECWA did express some concern over dog waste entering the stream (about six feet from the field). We are working with Durham Parks and Recreation to mitigate this potential problem and hope to have a workday at the park this spring or in the fall, planting vegetation that will uptake nutrients before they enter the creek. Good news is that data from other communities with parks next to creeks suggest that owners in designated dog park areas are far better at cleaning up after their dogs than owners using a general park area. Watch our listserv for details.

Please pick up after your pet!  
Fecal bacteria from pet waste is a major contributor to water pollution  
Both wildlife who depend on the creek for water and habitat and the parents of  
the children who play in the creek will thank you

## ECWA Presents to Kiwanis Club

Larry Brockman

Upon the request of Warren Johnson, President of the Kiwanis Club of Tabaccoland in Durham, ECWA board members Larry Brockman and Diana Davis recently provided a pictorial slide presentation to about twenty Kiwanis Club members. Larry and Diana showed photos of a variety of native flora and fauna, outlined how ECWA is involving the community (e.g., scouts, schools) in protecting land and water resources and shared ECWA's hopes of building even greater support in our community for this work. The presentation seemed to resonate with the Kiwanis members as they had many questions and shared their own stories of growing up in and seeing dramatic changes in the watershed. The Kiwanis indicated their desire to provide support to ECWA in the future.

If you are interested in ECWA possibly presenting to your organization, please feel free to contact ECWA's outreach coordinator, Kim Curtis at [kim@ellerbcreek.org](mailto:kim@ellerbcreek.org).

## Pearl Mill Preserve Progress

Kim Curtis

It's been just over a year since we began invasive plant eradication at our newly acquired Pearl Mill Preserve. At our most recent workday, held on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, volunteers worked in the cool exhilarating morning hours, attacking multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle and Japanese privet just opposite our new kiosk. The most spectacular moment was when the largest privet finally succumbed to the hand-saw efforts of Steve Cohn and Fred Broadwell. Others worked equally hard. Many thanks to Edie Cohn, Margot Ward, Dan Reade, Cynthia Kuhlstad, Larry Brockman, Rob Walpole, Frederick Hahn, April Walton, Matt Brockman, and Travis Cohn. While there's much work that remains to be done, what we achieved was opening a large space opposite the kiosk to light, and clearing sightlines from the greenway down into the wet boggy area where we will soon (April 14<sup>th</sup> – see adjacent article) begin to establish a lush wetland garden that will not only delight our senses but will filter pollutants from street run-off before it reaches the creek.

## Pearl Mill Preserve Workday, April 14

Larry Brockman

The Duke Park Neighborhood Association will team up with ECWA on Saturday, April 14 (9 am – noon) to continue work on the Pearl Mill Nature Preserve. All are welcome! Bring loppers, pruners and gloves to help in removing exotic and invasive plants from the Preserve. Volunteers will likely pick up trash along the greenway and the creek – don't forget to wear your boots if you want to get into the creek. Contact Kim Curtis ([kim@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:kim@ellerbecreek.org)) if you have any questions.



## New Logo Contest

Carl Stearns

The Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association is looking for a new logo. In addition to exposure and publicity among our membership and the general public, the designer of the winning logo will receive a \$300 cash prize and recognition in our newsletter and on our website. The winning design will announced Friday June 15th, 2007.

Entrants are encouraged to go to our website and learn about the organization as they contemplate designs. The Ellerbe Creek Watershed is largely urban, but it's a place where beavers, herons, deer and other animals are seen frequently in the green spaces that area residents enjoy. Any questions should be directed to [logo@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:logo@ellerbecreek.org). Logo will be used in a variety of print and digital work including: website, brochure, letterhead, business cards, t-shirts, & maps. For a complete set of guidelines email [logo@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:logo@ellerbecreek.org)

**Deadline is Tuesday, June 5th, 2007 @ 5PM**

# 17-Acre Woods Nature Walk

Dan Kaplan and Diana Davis

On February 24 a large group of intrepid individuals showed up for the chilly bird and beaver walk in ECWA's 17-Acre Preserve. Because of the large turn out the group was divided into two with half focusing on birding with Dan Kaplan and the other half learning about the resident beavers with ECWA biologist Diana Davis. The groups then switch off so everyone got the opportunity to participate in both halves of the program.

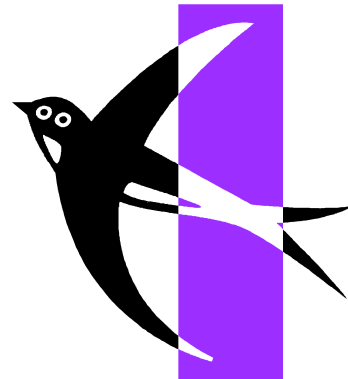
As for the birding piece, collectively they found 29 species. A few highlights: everyone got decent looks at Fox Sparrow, a striking and rather local and erratic winter resident that seems to like our little patch this year. The first group had a very close pass by a Cooper's Hawk who was quite agitated and unusually vocal, suggesting they may be staking out a nesting territory in the southern section of Indian Trail Park. The bird then perched cooperatively in the sun long enough for most to get good views. A high flyover Killdeer was new to the park/preserve list, approximately bird species # 115. Things slowed a bit for the second group, but they enjoyed close-up views of Yellow-rumped Warblers and, after some had left, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet so obliging the remaining group could look down on its unusually visible and expansive ruby crown.

More info about what can be found in the preserve can be found on the ECWA website under "critter surveys," including a seasonal bird checklist labeled (I hope temporarily) as "Kaplan list".

While the beaver portion of the walk didn't actually see the beavers (they are usually only seen near dusk) they did see evidence of their presence including slides, tree damage and the holes in the bank where the beavers are living. The stereotype beaver lodges are great protection only when they are completely surrounded by water. Most local water sources, including Ellerbe creek, aren't wide enough for a lodge so beavers in our area usually don't build lodges, instead they dig holes in stream banks. Both groups enjoyed the walk and asked lots of questions. The second group also got a close call with a low flying turkey vulture.

## New and Renewing Members Spring 2007

Mel Adams	Carol Anderson
Gerald & Roselyn Bowen	MaryAnn Chap & Nancy Keepkens
Carolyn Collidge-Riggs	Barker & Cavett French
Judy Gardner	Reva Harris
Margie Hatlori, Stan and Emi Abe	Andy Helminger
Jennifer McGovern	Neil Prose & Rhonda Klevansky
Dan Read	Theodore Salazar and Sarah Meyer
Steve Schewel & Lao Rubert	Louise & Tad Schmaltz
Chad Schoen	



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## ECWA WANTS YOU!

The Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association is rapidly growing and expanding and we are looking for a few good volunteers for various positions. The commitment levels range from a few times a year (volunteer and committee member positions) to the monthly commitment of becoming a board member. If you've ever wanted to do more for the watershed here is your chance!

If you are interested in helping in any of these areas please email Margot Ward at [margot@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:margot@ellerbecreek.org)

ECWA is looking for volunteer **Board Members** to fill the positions of:

Treasurer  
Fundraising committee Chair  
Stewardship committee Chair  
Events Committee Chair



ECWA also need **volunteers** to assist in

Writing grants  
Caring for wetland gardens  
Weeding in the 17 acre and Pearl Mill  
Leading educational events in the ECWA watershed

ECWA is growing and has developed a number of **committees** which need members and **volunteers**. Here are some of those opportunities:

The **Membership** Committee would like your assistance in planning and recruiting members.

The **Land Acquisition** Committee needs members and volunteers who have knowledge and skills related to real estate, conservation easements and ecosystems evaluations.

The **Promotional** Committee needs a volunteer or committee member willing to assist in developing our brand and promotional items.

The **Documentation** Committee needs someone to assist in collecting and archiving materials online

The **Outreach** Committee needs committee members and volunteers willing to identify and contact groups in Ellerbe Creek that don't know about our mission and organization, and volunteers willing to lead tours or talk to school groups and other groups about Ellerbe Creek.

We also need a **lawyer** willing to help in real estate transactions and an **engineer** willing to help design a bridge to connect the North and South banks of the 17-Acre Woods.

# Composting the Easy Way

Diana Davis

Composting is a great way not only to reduce the amount of trash you're contributing to the local landfills but it can also be a great source of nutrients for your garden. There are two basic ways to compost – the quick, careful and relatively complicated way and the slow, lazy but easy way. There is plenty of information out there about the quick way; this article covers the easy way.

Composting does not have to be complicated, nor does it require expensive compost bins. A simple compost bin can be constructed from a dark colored plastic trashcan (with lid). Cut a large hole in the bottom of the trashcan, leaving a small lip around the edge for support. Drill some large holes (1/2 inch is fine) around the sides and place in your yard where it will get several hours of sun a day. The more sun, the faster the compost. (I suggest making two.)

Do:

- Add kitchen vegetable scraps
- Add fall leaves
- Add vegetation from the garden (no weeds!)
- Add shredded paper
- Add poultry waste, rabbit waste, guinea pig waste and bedding

Don't

- Add animal products (remember fish is an animal, too)
- Add pet dog or cat waste
- Add dairy
- Add bones

Once you fill the bin, put a lid on it and start filling the second bin. Leave the first one alone, checking periodically. Within a year you will have a bin of compost. Turning will speed things along but even without turning it will eventually become a good soil additive.

While this is a slower way it's a great way to get started composting. The added bonus is that you reduce waste in the landfills and help your garden grow!



## Spring Wildlife Reminders

Small birds that have difficulty flying might be FLEDGLINGS (just out of the nest). These birds should be left alone. If you have any questions see last Spring's Ellerbe Creek Journal (available on-line at [www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org)) or call Piedmont Wildlife Center at 919-572-9453 (572-WILD) or [www.piedmontwildlifecenter.org](http://www.piedmontwildlifecenter.org).

Baby bunnies are fully weaned and independent at about four inches. Rabbit nests are often just a designated spot in the landscape for the babies to wait. Mother rabbits only visit twice a day. If you are unsure if a baby needs help contact Piedmont Wildlife Center at 919-572-9453.

## Please Support our Supporters ECWA's Newest Business Sponsors

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**THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT ECWA**

1. **Online:** Go to [www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org), click on the Network for Good logo, and follow the instructions.
2. **Regular mail:** fill out the form below and mail it in.
3. **Volunteer:** email our Membership Coordinator at [jable@nc.rr.com](mailto:jable@nc.rr.com), or call us at 682-9196.

ELLERBE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION		MEMBERSHIP FORM	
<b>Name</b>	_____		
<b>Address</b>	_____		
<b>Telephone</b>	_____	<b>E-mail</b>	_____
<b>Select Your Membership Level</b>	Regular Membership Levels		
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 – Individual <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 – Family Advanced Membership Levels Help Support Much Needed Staff Positions and Programs! <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 75 <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 250 <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____		
<b>Please check your area(s) of interest:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Land preservation <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising / Grant Research <input type="checkbox"/> Networking / Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Building <input type="checkbox"/> Education		<input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater Runoff Reduction and Utilization <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Garden / Habitat Restoration / Plant Rescue <input type="checkbox"/> Streamwatch (monitoring water quality & aquatic life) <input type="checkbox"/> Other
	Please send this completed form and your membership check to:		Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association P.O. Box 2679 Durham, NC 27705-2679

ECWA Office Phone Number: 919-698-8161. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible. Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Section at 1-888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the State.

	Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association P.O. Box 2679 Durham, NC 27705-2679
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