



The Ellerbe Creek Journal

News from the Watershed
Fall 2007

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Edited by Diana Davis
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ECWA Annual Meeting/Party

Larry Brockman

You are invited to the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association's (ECWA) Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 4, 3:30-6:00 PM at the Broad Street Cafe (1116 Broad St, Durham).

New this year, we will have a kids program (4:30 PM) that will focus on butterflies and other local flora and fauna in the Ellerbe Creek Watershed. So please bring them along. We will also have an "adult" presentation on what you can do in your own yard to help attract and sustain butterfly populations.

There is a LOT underway and we want to discuss with you our plans for acquiring new lands, for enhancing our existing preserves, and for creating a trail system from downtown Durham to Falls Lake. We will also elect new board members. We'll have maps of our three nature preserves so that you can check out our new trails.

ECWA will provide sweet and savory foods and the first 20 people through the door will get a ticket for a free drink of choice (wine, coffee, soft drink or beer) and we will raffle off a couple door prizes. Everyone (members or nonmembers) is welcome to attend, including kids.

This is a great meeting for all ECWA members, but also for anyone who wants to know more about the organization, and for anyone interested in getting involved in doing something locally for your community and the environment.

For more information, go to (www.ellerbecreek.org). Contact (larry@ellerbecreek.org) if you have any questions. Feel free to forward this message onto others that may have an interest in ECWA's goal of Protecting and Enhancing Durham's Land and Watershed.

ECWA Water Quality Initiative

Diana Davis

One of the major accomplishments this year has been the formation of ECWA's new Water Quality Committee. The first step for the water quality committee is compiling data on the current condition of the water quality in Ellerbe Creek. While a lot of information can be gathered from city, county and state records there are some gaps in the knowledge.

Storm water runoff is believed to be a significant problem for water quality. One reason is that storm water runoff brings pollutants into the creek; pollutants like lawn fertilizer, oil that drips onto roadways from cars, and dog feces and their accompanying bacteria. Storm surge also causes small macroinvertebrates and plants to be washed downstream. These small plants and animals are important not only for their direct impact on water quality, which they help to filter, but also because they are near the base of the aquatic food chain. A sudden increase in water flow also contributes to erosion, which adds sediment to the water.

This fall the Water Quality Committee has set up transects at two locations in Ellerbe Creek, one at 17-Acres and one near Washington St. and Club Blvd. These transects will consist of marking stakes set at specific intervals. They will be used to monitor how fast the water is moving through those parts of the creek. Each site will be monitored on a weekly basis throughout the year to give us a good profile of storm water surge and seasonal water flow variations.

Monitoring the flow is an easy task that requires a few minutes time, a stopwatch and an orange. That's right, an orange. The orange is dropped into the water above the upper marking stakes and the amount of time it takes to pass through the transect is recorded. This data, combined with information about the size and shape of the streambed, can help determine how much water flows through the creek. By monitoring weekly seasonal variation and storm surge flows can be observed.

The water quality committee is looking for a few volunteers who would be willing to conduct the flow monitoring on a regular basis. The idea is that each volunteer would go out, at most, once a month, and conduct the experiment. Training will be provided to ensure consistent data collection. If you are interested please contact Kathi Beratan at Kathi@ellerbecreek.org.

Thank you!

Joanne Abel

Banks Dixon and the Frog Hollow staff led ECWA volunteers as part of the National River Clean up week, providing boats, equipment and trash bags. Great Outdoor Provisions provided prizes for everyone who participated. This is the third year they have helped to clean up the creek where it flows into Falls Lake. Thanks to them for their continued support!

The ECWA board would also like to thank Paul Graf for bringing a great group of volunteers to spread mulch at the 17 Acre woods and for nominating ECWA for a REI grant. We are pleased that ECWA was awarded almost \$5,000 for our youth outreach project.

A Laudatio

Kim Curtis, with help from Steve Cohn, Steve Hiltner, Jane Finch, and Josh Rose

After more than five full years of incredible devotion as president of ECWA, Larry Brockman is stepping down. Below we trace something of the course of his tenure, his contribution, and our deep appreciation for all he has given to the Ellerbe community.

Larry attended his first ECWA meeting at Steve Williams's house in November 2001 and was elected a board member that very night. Immediately demonstrating what would become a pattern, Larry jumped right in, working on membership, producing the organization's first brochure, and helping set up and moderate the ECWA listserv on Yahoo.

At the June 2002 board meeting, ECWA founder Steve Hiltner took on the mantle of Executive Director and Larry was nominated to take his place as president. That fall, discussions began about the Glennstone land donation, a project that Larry has been instrumental in seeing to fruition.

Back then and throughout his tenure, Larry presided over many meetings that brimmed with ideas and enthusiasm. He was the stabilizing force on the board. Where the rest of us were prone to get carried away with ideas, causes, crises, schemes of all sorts, Larry always brought us back to reality, to what we could actually do with the money, time, energy and dreams that we had. Without him, we might have easily blown our entire yearly budget in a week, burned out all of our staff and volunteers, and probably run the group into the ground. And he did these things always in that low-key, diplomatic yet assertive way of his. Keeping the group at a sustainable pace has been a if not the crucial precondition of all the ECWA has been able to achieve in the last five years!

But Larry's love for hands-on work in the stream and on the land has also been central to who he is and what he has given: building trails, attacking exotic invasives, installing native plants, wading and cleaning or canoeing and cleaning. The example he set by how hard he worked and how much he cared was infectious. And more often than not he had his children Catie and Mattie in tow. The commitment of both Larry and his wife Beth to social change and the way they involve their whole family in that work has been an inspiration to many of us. Community involvement is an integral part of their lives--not something they do now and then but part of who they are.

Connected to all this is the pleasure Larry takes in people, whether it is being the tireless spokesperson for ECWA in his own neighborhood (really, at any public event he attends) or his excitement at involving young people - from scouts to children of friends to kids on bikes allured by bagels and cookies at the workday site, or just the pleasure he takes in inviting the board into his home each month, easing us into the evening's work at day's end with offerings of pretzels and beer. Larry's cheer and warmth of spirit has drawn countless people out of themselves and into communion with each other and the world around them.

Beaver Queen Pageant

Didi Pearce



What a hoot! The Third Annual Beaver Queen Pageant, sponsored by Beaver Lodge Local 1504 was held at Duke Park on Saturday June 2. The rain favored the event by holding off till later and the crowd of several hundred was pumped for the celebration of our very own Ellerbe Creek beavers. This year's pageant donated their proceeds to ECWA.

The Pageant arose as part of an effort to work with the beavers who had moved into the neighborhood and flooded humans' land (imagine the effrontery). It was organized by a group of neighbors who joined forces to protect the beavers and learn to live with them, their lodge, and their marsh, even to the point of doing battle with the NC DOT when the DOT wanted to kill the neighborhood beavers for doing typical beaver behaviors.

This year's pageant entertainment included music by Improv at the Beaver, dance numbers by the Disco Beaver Fever Dance Ensemble choreographed to the disco hit Saturday Night Beaver, the crowd chanting the traditional Beaver Chant led by the beaver kits, and the Beaver Queen Pageant contests, which included competitions for wetlands-ready wear, evening wear, and talent. Ballots sold for \$1 apiece and attendees were encouraged to stuff the ballot boxes and bribe the judges for their favorite contestant(s) - and for ECWA.

Beaver Queen contestant Belvis wowed the crowd with his touching rendition of 'In the Meadow' [Ghetto] and vivacious 'Beaver Las Vegas'. Yogi Beaver not only left us with a sense of deep inner World Peace but also used her broad tail to give the crowd a new message in each contest. Flapper LaTail seduced the crowd with her sultry 'Yes Sir, That's My Beaver' (you'd better leave 'er alone, sir) and Be Vell (La Bouche) Bevon touched us with her French chanteuse stylings singing 'I Love Beavers in the Springtime', 'Beavertime', and 'Beavers Who Love Beavers'. "Little Bluesy" Beaver played a hot saxophone which he often shares at late night full moon gigs for his Ellerbe Creek brethren, and World Wide Beaver shared her travel stories.

After the smoke [machine] cleared, the 2007 Beaver Queen is Yogi Beaver. This is an event that should not be missed next year. Find your inner beaver and let it rock at next year's Pageant. For more information on three years of Beaver Queen Pageants and our local beavers, check out <http://beaverlodgelocal1504.org>. For information on this year's pageant and great memories if you were there, go to the blog <http://dependableerection.blogspot.com/search/label/Beaver%20queen%20pageant>

Special Thanks

ECWA would like to thank member Rob Walpole for his services in the past months. He cleared a huge downed tree from blocking the trail in 17-Acre Wood; then replaced broken plexiglass with an unbreakable version in the Pearl Mill kiosk; and built 5 blue birdhouse kits for the Dacian Friday Creek Club youth to assemble. ECWA works because of great volunteers like Rob!

Uncovering Native Habitat, Rescued Plants and Bird Houses at 17 Acre Woods

Or

Just what is underneath those layers of Wysteria, Briars, Japanese Honeysuckle and Multiflora Rose?

Cynthia Kulstad

After a years work of removing the most aggressive layers of exotic invasive plants at the 17-Acre Woods Preserve, this growing season revealed some surprises. Spaces that had appeared to be barren when the 'briar patch' was first removed are now filled with plants including the Giant and Showy Sunflower (*Coreopsis tripteris*). The Sunflowers were seed sown by Steve Hiltner from plants on Ellerbe Creek near Red Mill Road. This year, despite the drought they are standing tall and blooming.

Earlier in the season, five foot shrubs of Arrowwood Viburnum, Pawpaw, Spice-Bush (*Lindera Benzoin*) Silky Dogwood, Buttonbush and Hearts-A-Bustin' were uncovered as well as taller Elderberry and Indigo Bush (*Amorpha frucicosa*). Small treasures are there too, like Atamasco lily, Prairie Phlox, Foamflower, Yellowroot and Partridgeberry. All this and more, makes me stand back in appreciation and gratitude of work that has come before- the vision, networking, grant writing, community and financial support, invasive removal, weeding, trail building, plant rescues, stream clean-up, birdhouse placing, mulch moving... So many hours of work and contributions by so many people!

On the Ellerbe Creek side of the paved walkway, where there hasn't been removal of exotic species for some years, you can see plants like Riverbirches, Buttonbushes, Silky Dogwood, ferns, Senna, Indian Hemp and our native rose still there, trying to reach for sunlight, under the tangles of Japanese Honeysuckle, Wysteria and Mutiflora Rose. These few "thugs" provide birds and animals with little compared to the diverse native habitat that is being suppressed underneath. So there is still more to do, see and learn down on Ellerbe Creek. Come join us!



Memorial Day Bird walk/Nature Hike- Glennstone Nature Preserve

Larry Brockman

It was a great turnout by both 2-legged creatures and by our fine feathered friends for the 2nd Annual Memorial Day bird walk/nature hike. We had well over 40 hikers and encountered close to 100 herons at the heron rookery. The Herald Sun sent a photographer and a reporter, which resulted in a good article in the paper the following day. We plan to work on constructing a new trail to the heron rookery this fall, so look for notices on the ECWA listserv about opportunities to help out with that. Also, given the popularity of the hike, we may have two organized hikes to the rookery in the spring of 2008, including the Memorial Day Bird walk.

ECWA Receives REI Youth Outdoor Education and Recreation Grant

Larry Brockman

ECWA recently received funding from Recreation Equipment Incorporated (REI) to pilot a project to more fully engage youth, particularly African American and Hispanic youth in outdoor education and recreation. The project will offer young people opportunities to discover, explore, learn about, and care for nature in their own neighborhoods and watershed in a fun but also structured way. Working with various local organizations, (e.g., churches, YMCA, Duke University, neighborhood associations), ECWA proposes to get youth out into the watershed to participate in activities such as nature outings/hikes, stream clean-ups, water monitoring, trail building, plant identification, exotic plant removal and planting of North Carolina native flora. Our ultimate goal is to offer them experiences that will foster their development so that they will become people who will appreciate all that nature has to offer and will become our next generation of environmental stewards. For more information about this effort or if you would like to support it or get involved, contact Kim Curtis (kim@ellerbecreek.org).



Kids and Creek Stewardship

Kim Curtis

Throughout last spring, three Duke students worked with members of ECWA to address the trash problem at the apartments on Dacian Avenue, just upstream from the Pearl Mill Preserve. The students' aim was to develop a resident-based solution to the problem, using guidance from the leadership course they were taking at Duke. They decided that what they could achieve in one semester was to reach out to the kids, thinking that if the kids got excited about the health of the stream, if they became knowledgeable stewards, their parents would begin to relate to the stream in a different way too.

They formed a regular Friday afternoon Creek Club, which continued to meet until mid June. One afternoon they looked for macroinvertebrates such as Caddisflies, Mayflies and Midge Pupa. These cool creatures help in assessing pollution levels in creeks. Another day they assembled four Bluebird houses, drove in the cedar stakes and put the houses up. The kids will be watching and reporting any nesting activity. In the future, look for postings in ECWA's kiosk. When the new semester begins for Duke, the Friday Creek Club will, we hope, have a new crew to follow the lead of the three seniors – James Hicks, Priscilla Baek and Jessica Palacios. Thanks to them, we may be inventing a model of collaboration between University students, ECWA and kids that we can multiply around the watershed.

Land Donated To ECWA

ECWA recently received a generous donation of approximately 1 acre of land in the Watts-Hospital Hillendale neighborhood from an anonymous donor. The land is adjacent to Indian Trail Park, north of Sprunt Ave and is just upstream of the 17-Acre Nature Preserve. The ECWA board is in the process of looking at options for how best to manage the land.

New Logo

Carl Stearns

ECWA is proud to announce that we have adopted a new logo - did you notice? This striking design by Randi Stewman of Carrboro was selected from numerous entries submitted to the logo contest that we held in the spring. The quality and quantity of entries meant that the selection process spanned two monthly board meetings. We are deeply grateful to all those that participated, and as a modest token of our appreciation we have given 1 year memberships to all the artists that submitted designs. Ms. Stewman was awarded a \$450 prize, which was made possible by an anonymous grant to ECWA for graphic design, printing, and other "branding" related expenses. Be on the lookout for T-shirts, bumper stickers and other ECWA swag that will soon be available - emblazoned with our fantastic new logo!

Garlic Mustard Alert

Cynthia Kuhlsted

Imagine a time before Japanese Honeysuckle was so prevalent in our woodlands, when maybe only a few plants had "escaped" from gardens and were just beginning to naturalize in Durham County or North Carolina for that matter. What if we knew then what we know now: that it would spread nearly everywhere in time, smothering, strangling and suppressing the native plant habitat. Would we remove those few plants? Or what if we knew before it got established, how the annual Asian Microstegium or Stilt Grass would so prolifically seed and spread through floodplains and woodlands? Would we take the time to stop it before it seeded and spread?

In the Ellerbe Creek Watershed we may have a chance to answer that question differently with another invasive: *Alliaria petiolata* (Garlic Mustard). It is a cool-season (flowers and seeds before summer heat) biennial (two year life cycle- just leaves the first year with flowering the second). Garlic Mustard forms small to extensive colonies on floodplains, under forest canopies and at forest margins and openings and is shade tolerant. It emits chemicals to kill surrounding plants. I try not to envision the flood plain without the Spring-beauty, Troutlilies and Hepatica, to name just a very few, it is too painful.

ECWA has identified Garlic Mustard in the Ellerbe Creek Watershed and located its known boundaries. In the past few years we have organized efforts to remove it when it just starts to bloom, when it is easier to identify, usually around Earthday. Creek and bank walking are great ways to get to know your watershed! Look for more information late winter and next Spring.

New Board Member

Kathi Beratan

Kathi Beratan is a Research Assistant Professor in NCSU's Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources. She started off as a geologist, tried to do "socially-relevant" science, then ran into the brick wall of "we biophysical scientists think we know so much, how come nobody will listen to us?" Her current research focuses on the dynamics of real-world decision-making about complex environmental issues, and on how we can more effectively integrate sound science into that process. Kathi joined the ECWA Board because she was impressed with the group's success in getting things done in Durham. She is Chair of ECWA's new water quality committee, giving her an opportunity to do something about her obsession with stormwater management, and thereby giving her husband and her dog a break.

ECWA Spring Party and Auction

Diana Tetens

ECWA would like to thank everyone who attended our Spring Party and Auction. It was great to see so many old and new friends come out to support our efforts and enjoy good food, music, and company. Thanks to you we raised over \$1600, a wonderful achievement for our first auction!

Special thanks to those listed below for their donations of food, beverages, music and the many wonderful and generously donated auction items.

American Dance Festival	Baba Ganoush Café	Betsy Blair		
Larry Brockman	Edie Cohn	Kim Curtis	George Danser	Diana Davis
Katherine DeMareo	Dale Evarts	Duke University Stores	Jim Finch	Food Lion
Galia Goodman	Harris Teeter Supermarkets	Bryant Holsenbeck	Just A Few Friends	
Kroeger Supermarkets	Darlene Kucken	Cynthia Kulstad	Jen Kuns	
Steven Miller	Peggy Myers	Bev Norwood	Kevin Quinlan	Lisa Randolph
Nancy & Barrett Robbins	Cheryl Shiflett	Joel Sholtes	Carl Stearns	
Sanelli's Restaurant	Lincoln Steffens	The Second String Band	Total Wine	
April Walton	Margot Ward	Heather Weigard	Bonnie Wright	

News From Pearl Mill Preserve and Upstream

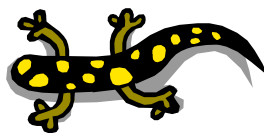
Kim Curtis

Kathi Beratan

In May, the city manager's office approved stormwater management's recommendation to daylight the stream just behind the Duke Diet and Fitness Center. A stormwater culvert running under the parking lot and recreational field at the Duke Diet and Fitness Center is cracked and has created sinkholes in the field. The 10 foot high fence that appeared in the spring was put up by the city to protect people from falling into the holes. ECWA has learned that this culvert carries the stormwater draining off of 254 acres, including the heart of downtown Durham. This is an enormous area of almost completely impervious surfaces. The water quality committee is talking to people with the City to learn about what options are available for stormwater mitigation at this site.

In other news volunteers have planted a new wetland garden just opposite the ECWA kiosk. Plantings include Swamp Sunflower *Helianthus Angustifolius*, Soft Rush *Juncus effuses*, Cutleaf Coneflower *Rudbeckia laciniata*, Common Milkweed *Asclepias syriaca*, Silky Dogwood *Cornus amomum*, Cup Flower, Giant Sunflower *Helianthus giganteus*, Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Arrowwood Vibernum and Elderberry. Some of these may be blooming as you read!

Volunteers have also been keeping greenway users updated on flora along the creek. Look for the "**What's Blooming Along the Creek**" heading in the kiosk. You will find photographs and hints about how to find what's in bloom, along with interesting facts like what's edible, uses by native Americans, and what pollinators and predators form their part in the web of life.



New and Re-newing Members



Gail Crabtree & Amanda Maris
Phyllis Curtis
Dale Gaddis
Thomas Grey
Mark Johnson & Mary Roberson
Gery Laarson
Don Moffitt
Bonnie Parker
Milo Pyne
Karsten and Carol Rist
Beth Silberman & Ken Rose
Judith Stafford
Giannina Wiegand

Kim Curtis & Rom Cole
Dory A. Van Duzer
Joanne Galli
William Holman
Julie Jones
Heather S. Linton
Mary Mudd
Joanne Pelligra
Mary Jane Rivers
Linda Schmalbecck
Kathleen Snyder
Karl & Annie Whitney

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Durham, NC 27701
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Durham, NC 27705
(919) 416-4800

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THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT ECWA

1. **Online:** Go to 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, or call us at 682-9196.

ELLERBE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION		MEMBERSHIP FORM	
Name	_____		
Address	_____		
Telephone	_____	E-mail	_____
Select Your Membership Level	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"/> \$ _____		
Please check your area(s) of interest:	<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

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