



# The Ellerbe Creek Journal

News from the Watershed  
Winter 2008

Published by the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association (ECWA)  
[www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org)

Edited by Diana Davis  
diana@ellerbecreek.org

---

## **NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund approves \$411,000 to restore Ellerbe Creek between Albany St. and I85**

Diana Tetens

The NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) has approved ECWA's proposal for \$411,000 to restore a 0.5 mile reach of Ellerbe Creek between Albany St. and I85 most of which flows through ECWA's 17-acre wood preserve. In addition to improving water quality and stream appearance, the high visibility of the site will assist ECWA's ongoing educational efforts, help us promote improved stewardship of the creek and maximize the environmental and recreational assets of the site.

The project should reduce suspended sediment loads by drastically reducing stream bank erosion, from an estimated 8-tons/linear foot/year to near zero. The restoration will also decrease storm flow velocity, improve the quality of vegetation on stream banks and in riparian areas, and help to restore the hydrogeography of the watershed. These improvements will improve water quality and aquatic habitat and help to address the causes of impaired biological integrity in the creek. And finally, the restoration and associated bank stabilization should go a long way towards protecting the 0.4 stretch of city greenway located adjacent to the creek and ensure the protection of this important and highly valued recreation resource.

In the coming months, ECWA will be working hard to push the City Council to fund the design phase of the expansion of the West Ellerbe Creek Trail located adjacent to the restoration (Guess Road to I85). Funding of the design at this time would allow the restoration and greenway installation to occur simultaneously thereby minimizing land disturbance, maximizing coordination of both projects and providing a large portion of the match dollars required under the terms of the grant.

Please stay tuned for listserv updates as we'll be calling for your help in this effort and asking you to let Council members know the importance of funding the greenway extension design in this fiscal year. Please contact Diana Tetens at the ECWA office if you'd like to participate in developing a strategy, (i.e., mobilizing people to contact the city) to get the greenway funded.

## New Greenway

Carl Stearn

Durham has a new greenway! It's short, but it connects Duke Park, Acadia St, and Glendale Ave to the North/South Greenway via a short stretch of Washington St. It is officially called the Duke Park Spur trail. We can thank the City's Public Works Department for working with the NCDOT to get this spur trail completed as part of the I-85 widening project. The Parks and Rec Department has taken it over and will be adding signs for users and bollards to keep vehicles out.

It's almost budget season again down at City Hall - ECWA is going to be pushing the City Council to fund the expansion of the planned greenway system again this year, and we'll need our member's voices to get the message across. We are most eager to see the completion of the West Ellerbe Creek Trail that would connect ECWA's 17 Acre Wood Preserve and the Watts-Hillandale neighborhood to the North-South Greenway at Stadium Dr. I'm looking forward to the day when I can ride my bike down the greenway to go shopping at Northpointe! We'll keep you posted as those efforts develop, and of course, please let your Council members know how you feel.

## Glennstone Preserve Workday – New Trail to Heron Rookery

Larry Brockman

In early October we had over 50 people participate in a very successful workday at the 83 acre Glennstone Nature Preserve. This was the largest group of volunteers to ever come together for an ECWA workday. The volunteers were primarily youth from Immaculate Conception Church preparing for confirmation. The group was tasked with a variety of jobs, including removing exotic plants, trail maintenance, trash clean up and building a new trail. The work went smoothly as we had many adults to help lead small crews including several ECWA board members and Glennstone neighborhood volunteers, Ken Privette and Rick Zechman.

The biggest effort was put into clearing a new trail to the heron rookery. The new trail, which needs a bit more work before it's complete, will run from Woodcock Trail down through the Corps of Engineers game lands property to the heron rookery. Look for an announcement on ECWA's listserv for a spring bird walk to the heron rookery.



## Nature Walks.

Diana Davis

In 2007 ECWA conducted several very well attended nature walks. Clearly the demand is there. We recently recruited a volunteer, Leslie McClellan, to help coordinate these walks and are trying to make them a monthly event. So far for 2008 we have tentatively scheduled several bird watching walks, a bat walk, and our ever-popular Memorial Day Weekend hike to the Great Blue Heron Rookery. We are always in need of leaders so if you or someone you know might be interested please contact Leslie at [leslieadam@mindspring.com](mailto:leslieadam@mindspring.com). Walks are posted on the listserv so watch for them.

# The Impacts of Stormwater on Ellerbe Creek

Kathi Beratan

Ellerbe Creek, like most urban streams, is degraded; only a small number of the plants and animals that should be living in and alongside the creek are present. The creek's artificially steep, high banks and the channel's overly straight path provide clues as to what happened to those plants and animals.

The most important cause of degradation in urban streams today is *stormwater* flowing into the creek from streets, roofs, sidewalks, and other hard surfaces. Water cannot seep through these human-built surfaces, and so they are collectively referred to as *impervious surfaces*.

In a healthy forest, like the one that used to cover almost all of this area, most rain water soaks into the leaf litter and the underlying soil. Some of that soaked-in water is taken up by tree roots, a little bit evaporates and a significant amount of the water slowly filters down into the water table which slowly feeds into streams. In a healthy, natural system almost no rain water flows over the surface directly into streams.

Impervious surfaces change what happens to rain water. Rather than filtering into the soil and very gradually flowing into the creek, rain water flows rapidly along the hard surface, picking up whatever chemicals, trash, pet waste and other unsavory stuff, and carrying it to a gutter or drainpipe which flows to a storm drain and pours into the nearest creek. Instead of gradually entering the creek, a large surge of water gets dumped in very quickly.

That surge of water causes erosion of the stream channel and banks, it scours sediment and washes plants and animals downstream. And because so much water is carried rapidly to the stream rather than filtering into the ground where it travels slowly to feed the stream year round, the streamflow during dry times is abnormally low. Some smaller streams that used to flow all year long now go dry in the summer.

In 2008, the Water Quality Committee will be collecting basic information that will help us understand the specific effects of stormwater on the Ellerbe Creek system, so that we can identify a few places where the City of Durham and ECWA might work together to improve the health of the Creek's ecosystems. ECWA volunteers will be collecting two types of information about stormwater and its effects on the Ellerbe Creek system. We will walk the length of the stream and its tributaries, mapping the condition of the channel and the banks, and noting all of the places where stormwater is piped or directed into the stream. In addition, we will measure stream flow following storm events. These data will help us identify the main sources of problems, and to develop a plan to improve the health of Ellerbe Creek's ecosystems.

We are looking for volunteers to help. If you'd like to learn more, contact Kathi Beratan ([kathi@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:kathi@ellerbecreek.org)).



# Annual Meeting

Steve Cohn, Joanne Able, Diana Davis

On November 4th about fifty people attended the 2007 annual meeting of the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association at the Broad Street Café. The meeting is a time to meet, mingle, renew memberships and to let the board know what you, the membership, would like to see from ECWA. Generally, people said they cared most about the preserves and trails in their own part of Durham, but there was also strong support for such ECWA causes as saving the beaver marsh, ensuring that parcels of land all along the creek get preserved, improving water quality and stormwater issues, making Durham a more walkable city, and extending the West Ellerbe Creek Trail.

ECWA board members also took this opportunity to introduce themselves to the membership and to outline the boards plans for the upcoming year. Executive Director Diana Tetans thanked all the members and donors, and she explained ECWA's work with the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative. She also talked about ECWA's water quality and environmental education work and about the dream of a walkable corridor from the headwaters of Ellerbe Creek all the way to Falls Lake. She described what a great investment ECWA is--the huge amount that gets accomplished for our community on a budget of just \$40,000. And she talked about how ECWA is poised to do even more, with the support of our community, in the coming year.

After the public comment period Peter Schubert gave a passionate and detailed talk on how to save water at home, both by containing rainwater and by using less water. This was a highly relevant talk given the current extreme drought conditions.

Departing ECWA President Larry Brockman then recognized and gave t-shirts (with our new logo) to several volunteers who had made significant contributions in the past year: Rick Zeckman, for his ongoing work at the Glennstone Preserve; Fred Broadwell, for his work with garlic mustard removal and overall volunteerism; Cynthia Kulstad, for the many extra volunteer hours she puts in beyond her paid work as ECWA's preserve manager; and Dan Kaplan, for leading several birdwalks. Executive Director Diana Tetans added recognition of Mike and Cheryl Shifflett, for their donation of ECWA's office space.

Elections were held for several open positions on ECWA's board (ECWA's board members all serve two-year terms): Margot Ward was chosen as ECWA's new President, and Ted Compton was chosen as Treasurer, to join Vice-President Kim Curtis and Secretary Steve Cohn as ECWA's officers. Kathi Beratan, Larry Brockman, and Lisa Satterwhite were chosen as board members, to join continuing board members Joanne Abel, Diana Davis, and Carl Stearns.

If you missed the meeting you missed a great opportunity to meet the board and other ECWA members. You also missed the fabulous raffle prizes, the chance to renew your membership and the first opportunity to purchase the new ECWA t-shirts, emblazoned with our new heron logo. It was certainly gratifying to see so many people and so much enthusiasm for what ECWA is accomplishing. We hope to see even more of you at next year's meeting, as ECWA continues to grow larger and stronger with each passing year.



## 2007 Accomplishments

Membership in ECWA is one of the best ways you can contribute to our community's sustainability, vibrancy and quality of life. With a 2007 annual operating budget of less than \$40,000, we have brought close to \$450,000 in grant and contract funds to the watershed for initiatives relating to water quality, trail building, environmental education, stream restoration and enhancement of public green space. We have hosted educational and recreational events, have lobbied on behalf of important state and local issues, have mobilized quickly to address threats to the creek and watershed and, with the help of hundreds of community volunteers, we have maintained and managed three preserves totaling over 100 acres. Some of our 2007 highlights include:

- Built strong ties with the new management at the Dacian Apartments and with the apartment residents, working with neighborhood kids to clean up the dumpsite along the creek.
- Obtained a \$411,000 grant from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund to fund restoration of Ellerbe Creek between Albany Street and Interstate 85.
- Spearheaded an effort to persuade the City Council to fund the planning for the extension of the W. Ellerbe Creek Greenway Trail from Guess Road to the intersection of Broad Street and Stadium Drive. Although the funding did not occur this budget cycle, the Council was forced to discuss this issue because they heard from many of us.
- Established a strong Water Quality Committee and began efforts to monitor stream flows and inputs on a regular basis.
- Put major efforts into removing invasive exotics in the 17-Acre Wood and stopped the City's plans to cut trees next to the creek at the same time that we built closer relationships with City staff.
- Stabilized and beautified the Pearl Mill Preserve.
- Hosted guided nature walks throughout the year including the Memorial Day Bird Walk to one of the largest heron rookeries in the Piedmont.
- Organized ECWA's first Biodiesel Bus/Car Watershed Tour.

To see images related to these accomplishments and for additional ECWA related highlights and go to [www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org) and scroll down to "2007 ECWA Accomplishments."

## Parting Words from the Past President

Larry Brockman

I was asked to share a few parting thoughts or “recap” my 5 years as the ECWA president. I thought about the last 5 years and all of the changes that have occurred, the challenges we have faced and the growth and accomplishments of the organization and determined it would be very difficult to recap my 5 years in such away that would be succinct.

However, I would like to say that it has been a real honor and joy to work with so many talented and dedicated people who care so deeply about their community and environment. The volunteer work with ECWA has been an important part of my life here in Durham and to see how the community is embracing and supporting ECWA’s goal of connecting people to their immediate environment has brought me a great deal of personal satisfaction.

Although, I am no longer the President, I am still on the ECWA board and am the chair of the Land Stewardship Committee that is focused on enhancing and maintaining the more 100 acres that ECWA now currently owns. I have great confidence in Margot Ward, who has agreed to take on the role of ECWA president. Margot is a very talented individual who brings great organizational skills to the job, knows how to work effectively with people and cares deeply about the environment. Please continue to support Margot and ECWA in what ever way you can and consider joining one of our committees or the board – I am confident you will find it very rewarding and it will feed your soul.

## Looking Forward

Margot Ward

We have accomplished an incredible amount in the past year: bringing to light numbers of native plants in our preserves, establishing a stream monitoring system, involving more and more people in our efforts to eradicate invasive species, getting folks out to see the diversity of birds and other animals in the watershed, partnering with the city and other groups, and acquiring properties.

In the next couple of years I see us continuing to grow. I look forward to seeing more involvement with communities; more partnerships with the city and county, new land preservation projects, stream restoration, fewer invasive plants, real improvements in the quality of the water and more diversity of life in the water and watershed.

I’m proud to belong to the active board, and work with the dedicated staff and volunteers of ECWA. We are making a difference in what the future holds for Durham. Thank you for letting me be the president of this exciting organization.



## Volunteer Opportunity

One of the major goals of the publications committee for 2008 is a redesign of the ECWA website ([www.ellerbecreek.org](http://www.ellerbecreek.org)). This website holds a great deal of good information but the layout could be improved for ease of viewing. If you are interested in helping with this exciting project, even if you have no experience designing a website, please contact Diana Davis at [Diana@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:Diana@ellerbecreek.org).

### Welcome our Newest Board Member Ted Compton

Ted graduated from USC (that's U. South Carolina) in 1969 with a B.S. in Physics and completed a Ph.D. in Physics at UNC-CH in 1978 with one brief interruption to teach at Hillside High School for a year (yes it took awhile to get through school back then.) After earning his Ph.D., Ted immediately abandoned physics to take a job with Data General, a computer company with offices in RTP. Ted worked his way from kernel programmer to management to system architect over the next 20 years and retired from actively pursuing a wage in 2006.

Ted has been involved in industry standards bodies, WHHNA (a past president), and now ECWA. He was attracted to ECWA because of the opportunity to help establish hiking and biking trails in Durham. Ted is an avid biker and has been using bikes for transportation since graduate school. He was attracted to ECWA because of the opportunity to help establish hiking and biking trails in Durham. Though it has been nearly a decade since his last century ride, now that he has time to train again, he hope to get at least a metric century in the next year. Also, strange as it may seem, he finds financial matters interesting, challenging and " kind of like crossword puzzles with sudoku thrown in".

### Welcome to Basma Mohammad ECWA's new land protection assistant!

Diana Tetans

We'd like to introduce and offer a big welcome to Basma Mohammad, ECWA's new land protection assistant. Basma came to Durham from the San Francisco Bay area to obtain her Master's of Environmental Management from Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences. Before moving to this area, Basma enjoyed exploring the creeks and mudflats searching for marine invasive species for the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. She is an avid nature lover and is enthused to work, explore and contribute to ECWA's ongoing watershed protection efforts.

Basma will assist with ECWA's land protection work for the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative (UNCWI). UNCWI is a multi-party effort developed to protect lands rated critical to protecting water quality throughout the Upper Neuse River Basin. Through UNCWI, ECWA works with landowners, local government and agencies and other organizations to facilitate voluntary land and water protection agreements including land purchase, conservation easements, stream restoration and other site-specific approaches.

# ECWA Helps Stop Tree Cutting Along Ellerbe Creek

Larry Brockman

Thanks to the watchful eyes of ECWA members Priscilla Burcham and Ned Kennington, ECWA was able to halt an extensive effort by the City of Durham's Public Works to cut trees along the Ellerbe Creek main stream. Trees along streams play an important role in holding soils in place, improving water quality and supporting the aquatic life in a stream.

Although the city stormwater staff understands the benefits of trees along the stream, the City appears to be caught between a rock and a hard place as they have a flood control "maintenance agreement" with the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) that dates back to the 1960s which requires the "removal of all trees in the main channel". The Corps has recently been pushing on the City to implement this aspect of the maintenance agreement and has suggested that ignoring the City's maintenance obligations could jeopardize Federal and State funding opportunities for storm water design and construction.

ECWA did some research and found that according to the State of North Carolina's water quality program, the City/Corps can not cut trees within 50 feet of the stream without a State issued Neuse River buffer permit. The State has indicated that they are not likely to permit such an aggressive and extensive tree cutting program for "flood control" purpose. The Corps on the other hand has suggested that the State may not have jurisdiction and that no permit is needed to proceed.

For the time being, no trees are being cut and we are hopeful that will remain the case. However, the ECWA board is ready to continue to fight to bring reason to this issue if necessary, and we may need to call upon our membership to voice their opinions also. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for anything that you see that may seem to be amiss in the watershed and contact us if you do. We will keep you updated on this issue via the ECWA listserv.

## New and Renewing Members

Joanne Abel & Rama Mills	Michele DeRose	Janet Martell	Carl Stearns and Jazmin Solis
Mark Ambrose	Kathleen DuVal and Marty Smith	Coin Page	Alan and Erika Stone
Barbara Beaman	John Farnum	Eileen Reynolds	Sara Terry
Libby Searles-Bohs	Heather and Ben Fisher	Joel Meyer	Ivan Urlaub
Gerlad L. Bowen	Cavett and Barker French	Lisa Moreau & Kevin Young	Dory Van Duzer
Fred Broadwell	Dale Gaddis	Joseph Neff	Margot Ward and April Walton
Larry and Beth Brockman	Mary Anne McDonald	Billy & Eve Olive	Lisa Warner & Chris Rusconi
Priscilla Burcham	Bil Gilbert	Didi Pearce	Rick & Kathryn Zechman
Marilyn Butler & Robert Nichols	Abby & Michael Goldman	Joan Peck	
Allison Cain	Bob Healy	Ann Marie Rasmussen	
Retta, Cassidy and Katelin Walpole	Daniel Kaplan & Marian Abernathy	Nancy Blood & Cathy Chandler	
Steve and Edie Cohn	Ned & Betsy Kennington	Steve Schewel & Lao Rubert	
Kathie Coyle & Wade Wall	George & Mary Koch	Michael Freemark & Anne Slifkin	
Kim and Rom Curtis	Cynthia Kulstad	Lorisa Seibel and Ron Grunwald	
Lewis Dancy and Michael Case	Robert Kustra	Barbara Smalley	
Diana Davis & John Stellwagen	Gordon Mantler	Timothy & Wendi Gale	



## Please Support our Supporters ECWA's Business Sponsors



G. Crabtree Home Building  
1507 Tyler Ct.  
Durham, NC 27701  
(919) 956-5603

Ninth Street Bakery  
136 East Chapel Hill St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
(919) 286-0303



ACME Plumbing  
Commercial Plumbing Construction - 919 682-1072  
Residential Plumbing Service - 919 688-1340

Accent Hardwood Flooring  
246 Morris St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
(919) 683-3941

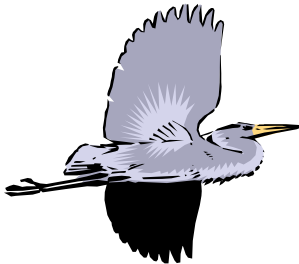
America Labor  
1308 Broad St.  
Durham, NC 27705

Cozy, Inc.  
770 Ninth St.  
Durham, NC 27705  
(919) 286-3400

Broad St. Café  
1116 Broad St.  
Durham, NC 27705  
(919) 416-9707

Jim Finch, MD and Jane Finch LCSW  
910 Broad St.  
Durham, NC 27705  
(919) 416-4800

Stone Brothers & Byrd  
700 Washington St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
(919) 682-1311



Thanks to the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership for their support in printing this newsletter

### Table of Contents

Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant	1	New Greenway	2
Glennstone update	2	Nature Walks	2
The Impact of Stormwater	3	Annual Meeting Review	4
2007 Accomplishments	5	Parting Words from Past President	6
Looking Forward	6	Web Site Plans	7
New Board Member	7	Land Protection Assistant	7
Tree Cutting Along Ellerbe Creek	8	New and Renewing Members	8
Business Sponsors	9		



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



**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.

<b>ELLERBE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION</b>		<b>MEMBERSHIP FORM</b>	
<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:		<b>Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association</b> 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.