



# The Ellerbe Creek Journal

News from the Watershed  
Spring/Summer 2008

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

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## National River Cleanup 2008 June 8, 2008

Joanne Abel

Join ECWA and [Frog Hollow Outdoors](http://www.froghollowoutdoors.com) on June 8, 2008 from 2 to 4:30 for the 2008 National River Clean Up Week. We will clean up Ellerbe Creek near the Falls Lake. This is a lovely part of the creek, until you reach the point where it flows into the Lake; there all the trash that has been thrown into the creek as it travels through Durham piles up at a natural dam and creates a floating trash pile. Prizes will be given for the most trash collected and the most unusual object found in the creek, among other categories.

Last year boaters got some fabulous views of osprey at a nest site along the creek. While the main focus is on picking up trash there will also be looking at other birds, turtles, and frogs as we paddle along. It's their home and they will appreciate any cleaning up we can accomplish.

Register by sending an e-mail to [info@froghollowoutdoors.com](mailto:info@froghollowoutdoors.com). Include your name, number in your party, a phone number where you can be reached, and whether you are bringing your own boat or will be using one of Frog Hollow's. Directions will be provided with registration.

ECWA thanks the folks at Frog Hollow for providing boats and helping to organize this event.



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# The Great Blue Heron

## (*Ardea herodias*)

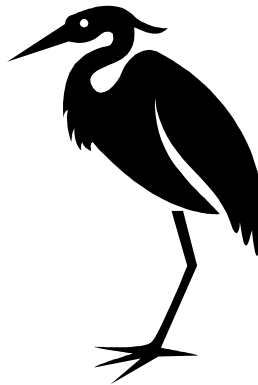
Diana Davis

Even casual bird watchers easily recognize great blue herons; they are the only large gray (blue) wading bird in the area. Since they stand nearly four feet tall it's hard to mistake them for anything else. These birds can be frequently spotted standing alone along lakes, rivers or even by backyard water gardens. When startled they let out a loud croak and fly away with heavy yet graceful wing beats.

The great blue heron is predominately a piscivore – that means they eat fish (pisces). They stand by the water's edge, neck curved in a graceful S-shape, watching for fish and then strike out suddenly with great speed and strength. They will occasionally supplement their fishy diet with crawfish, lizards and mice.

Despite their solitary hunting behavior great blue herons nest in colonies known as rookeries. Here dozens to hundreds of herons will gather at one location to build nests and raise their young. These rookeries usually require trees near a flooded area. The birds will fly out from the rookery to hunt, returning to care for their young. In areas with multiple heron and heron-like species great blues will nest in mixed species rookeries.

While their numbers were depleted early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to uncontrolled hunting they have rebounded and are considered to be a healthy population. Individual birds can be injured by discarded fishing lines and hooks, rookeries can be abandoned due to disturbances, especially early in the nesting season, and the destruction of wetland habitats is potentially a problem for the species as a whole. Fortunately great blue herons adapt well to being near humans. With a little care and preservation of key wetland areas the great blue heron should continue to thrive.



## Memorial Day Heron Rookery Hike

Once again ECWA has planned an annual hike to the Great Blue Heron Rookery near our Glennstone Nature Preserve property. Events will start early with a 7:30 bird hike, led by Tom Driscoll. For those of you who don't get up with the birds a second walk will start at 9:30. There will be fewer birds around but the herons will be coming and going all day, tending to their chicks.

Attendance will be limited to minimize the disturbance of the nesting herons. Please email Leslie at [Leslie@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:Leslie@ellerbecreek.org) to RSVP.

## New Mission and Vision Statements

Carl Stearns

The board of directors of the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association has been developing new mission and vision statements that will guide our activities in the future. With your help we've done a lot of growing in the last couple years, and we've got a lot of exciting possibilities on the horizon. There's been a lot of soul searching and deliberation as we decide how to focus our energies for maximum benefit to the community and the creek. Read on, and join us in fulfilling our mission in making our vision of Ellerbe Creek a reality. And as always, we welcome your feedback.

**Vision:** The Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association envisions a living creek connecting human and natural communities in Durham.

To achieve this vision, ECWA will :

- Enable a living creek - a healthy stream in which native species thrive.
- Create a network of preserves and trails along which people can hike, bike, and walk from the Ellerbe Creek headwaters to Falls Lake.
- Build ties among Durham's diverse neighborhoods and communities using Ellerbe Creek as a link.
- Partner with the City and other groups that seek to move Durham to become a regional model for proactive urban stormwater management.
- Help adults, and especially young people, have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate being outdoors in a learning and safe environment.

# Beaver Queen Pageant June 7, 2008

Joanne Abel

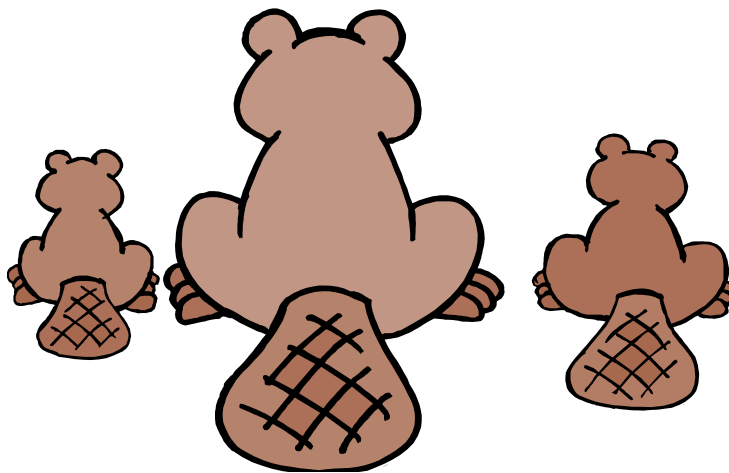
Hold the date! The 4th Annual Beaver Queen Pageant will be held on Saturday, June 7th in Duke Park Meadow (behind the old bath house.) The fun begins at 5:00, with X-Tream Beaver Makeovers and other activities. The Pageant itself starts at 6:00. This event is staged with nonstop action including the BQ contestants and the popular Disco Beaver Fever Dancers.

The theme this year will be [HAIR](#), and the [Summer of Love](#). Pull out your love beads and tie-died shirts! Dressing in keeping with the theme is encouraged. Yogi Beaver, the 2007 Beaver Queen, will bring in the Age of Aquarius as one of her last official acts.

Could we have an ECWA Beaver Queen among us? Would you like to compete for the crown? Contestants compete in four categories: talent, eveningwear, wetland-ready wear, and personal essay. The competition will be fierce. If you would like to put your tail in the ring contact the Beaver Lodge Local 1405 at [beaverlodgelocal1504@gmail.com](mailto:beaverlodgelocal1504@gmail.com)

The Pageant itself is free, but we hope you will bring money to bribe the judges and purchase Beaver Queen memorabilia, because all the proceeds will go to the Ellerbe Creek Watershed (and Beaver Habitat Protection) Association! Join us for this unique event and we bet that you will find yourself laughing so hard it hurts, while at the same time raising money for ECWA! Bring your own chair or blanket, a picnic dinner. This "family drag" pageant is not to be missed. The kits (children) have their own part in the fun.

ECWA will need volunteers to help the day of the event (probably starting around 4:00), if you want to help out please contact: Joanne Abel at [jabel@nc.rr.com](mailto:jabel@nc.rr.com)



# ECWA Organizes Push for Greenways

Larry Brockman

One of ECWA's goals is to help connect people in our community to their surrounding environment. With that goal in mind, ECWA recently partnered with Durham Open Space and Trails Committee to organize various neighborhoods and community leaders to persuade the Durham City Council to support funds for the design and planning of two greenway extensions (West Ellerbe Creek Trail and the Pearsontown Trail). We will likely have to push for funding the actual construction in 2009.

To this end, ECWA was very busy in February and March organizing meetings and communicating with the City Parks Dept., the city manager, the city council and Mayor Bell. We educated them about the benefits of greenways and why they should approve funds for the West Ellerbe Creek Trail and the Pearsontown Trail. We put a call out to various listserves (e.g., neighborhood, environmental, cycling) and posted signs along existing greenways asking folks to join us at the March 10 "Coffee with Council" meeting. The response was outstanding, more than 80 trail supporters were there with green signs stating "I Support Greenways". At 7:15 PM, over 60 people filed into the meeting space until two whole walls were lined with supporters.

Before that meeting, we had two Council members (Diane Catotti, Mike Woodard) provide verbal commitments to support the trail. After the meeting, three more council members (Farad Ali, Eugene Brown and Howard Clement) verbally committed to supporting funds in the 2009 budget for the two greenways. We need four to ensure the funds stay in the 2009 budget. We have a call into the Mayor, requesting his support, but he has yet to respond. Cora Cole-McFadden was not present at the meeting, but ECWA plans to meet with her in April before budget discussions begin in earnest.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to join us at the Coffee with Council meeting and to many others who contacted the city council expressing your support. We will know near the end of June if we were successful. It looks promising, but we may need to call upon you one more time if any council members start to waver. Let's keep the pressure on.

If you want to be added to the list of people we can contact to show support for more greenways/trails, please e-mail Larry Brockman at ([brockman.larry@gmail.com](mailto:brockman.larry@gmail.com)) Thanks again for working hard to make a positive difference in our community.





## Farewell Kim Curtis

Cynthia Kulstad

In late March I stopped by ECWA's Pearl Mill Preserve and was surprised by the blue bloom of *Phlox divaricata*. Seeing the blue Phlox made me immediately think of Kim Curtis who, a few years ago, transplanted it there from a larger patch upstream. I was seeing it on one of those first Spring days, brimming with light, new buds and possibilities. The blooming Phlox and the day seem to me a pretty good analogy to describe Kim's interest, energy and essence in the Ellerbe Creek watershed.

Kim was engaged, whether it was organizing a workday at her beloved Pearl Mill or serving as vice president of ECWA or pulling Garlic Mustard all afternoon and then going to the Beaver Pond after and seeing the Red Headed Woodpecker or exploring all the different areas of the watershed or making Persimmon pudding or Garlic Mustard Pesto (believe it!) or finding Paw-paw trees, collecting seeds or sharing a plant's historical or medicinal use or writing of her personal experience of discovery and learning at Pearl Mill Preserve or applying for grants or persisting in her dreams of engaging Everybody in their "ecological address" and urban wilderness or expressing her dream of making rafting Ellerbe Creek to Falls Lake a reality... you get the idea.

And I know that I am just one of many who experienced this. We will miss her. And wish her all the best.

## Duke Gardens Staff comes to 17-Acre Wood Preserve for a Workday

Cynthia Kulstad

In mid-March the staff of Duke Gardens temporarily relocated to 17- Acre Woods Preserve. As a community service/staff "retreat", 17 hardy souls worked to clear the mid-story layer of invasive plants from the southwest corner of the footbridge. They worked together as a team to remove the taller, more aggressive (mostly berry producing and bird dispersed) shrubs such as Privet and Asian Olive, and climbing vines like Euonymus and English Ivy. Once established in native woods these exotic evergreens act to shade the forest floor, inhibiting native plant succession and diversity.

The crew filled a large dump truck to the brim! ECWA MUCH appreciates their work and enthusiasm. Facing the daunting and on-going task of restoring the habitat of our urban Preserves, they were a breath of fresh air. We want to thank each and every one of Duke Garden's staff and especially Stefan Bloodworth who initiated and coordinated this effort with us. Come back anytime!



## What is UNCWI and what does it have to do with ECWA?

Diana Tetens

Over the past year, we've intermittently mentioned "UNCWI" in newsletters, meetings and discussions. For those of you who may have missed initial explanations and are befuddled by this odd acronym, "UNCWI" stands for the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative; a collaborative effort to protect lands considered critical to the long-term safety and health of all drinking water supplies for the communities in the Upper Neuse River Basin.

The Upper Neuse River Basin Association defines the Upper Neuse Basin as the area draining to the Falls Lake Reservoir. The Basin spans 770-square miles, includes six counties and contains nine public drinking water supply reservoirs that serve half a million people in Raleigh, Durham and surrounding areas. Water quality degradation in the basin is increasing due to the effects of population growth and associated development. With a projected population increase of 50% by 2025, it is clear that regulations alone will not be enough to protect drinking water supplies without also protecting the forest, streams and other natural areas that retain and filter stormwater.

The objective of UNCWI is to reduce pollutants entering the Neuse River and its tributaries by protecting these natural areas. In the first phase of the project the Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) developed a water quality model that identified lands that were important to protecting water quality based on seven criteria: including riparian areas, headwater catchments, land use, minimizing soil erosion, wetland retention, vertical hydraulic conductance and drinking water sources. Each parcel in the Upper Neuse Basin has been assigned a water quality score based on these criteria.

Initiative partners are conducting outreach to landowners, local governments and the public with information about land conservation options and working to acquire key parcels of land through voluntary purchase or donation of land or conservation agreements. Lands that both protect water quality and meet land conservation goals, such as recreation and the protection of undeveloped natural areas are given highest priority for protection. Partners in the Initiative include the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association, Eno River Association, Tar River Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Triangle Greenways Council, Triangle J Council of Governments, Triangle Land Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Upper Neuse River Basin Association and the City of Raleigh. Although these partners play a key role in UNCWI, the initiative is a broad based effort with landowners, local and county governments, citizen groups, state agencies and landowners all playing important roles in the making the initiative a success.

Here in the Ellerbe Creek Watershed, ECWA has identified numerous parcels that protect water quality and serve broader goals such as providing a place for recreation and protecting the watershed's natural beauty. We have recently written grants for funds to purchase two key parcels and are working to arrange conservation easements and other protection strategies for several others. We are excited that UNCWI is working to protect land and water throughout the Upper Neuse Basin and are proud to be partners in the initiative.

## Volunteer Profile – Leslie McClellan

Diana Davis

Over the past year ECWA has been increasing the number and rate of our nature hikes. A big reason we've been able to do this is the volunteer work of Leslie McClellan. Leslie came on a winter wildlife hike and enjoyed it so much that she volunteered to help coordinate more frequent walks. She finds volunteers to lead the hikes, sends out email notifications, and makes sure that everything the hike leader needs is available.

If you or someone you know might be interested in leading a hike or if there is a hike topic you'd be particularly interested in you can contact Leslie at [leslie@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:leslie@ellerbecreek.org).

So next time you join ECWA for a nature hike know that you're getting that opportunity thanks to the hard work of our fabulous volunteer – Leslie.

Thanks, Leslie!

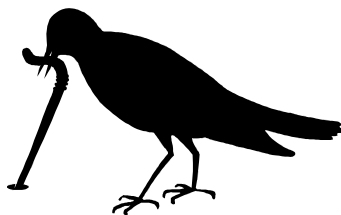


## Volunteer Opportunity Board Members

ECWA is looking for a few good volunteers to join the Board. Volunteers should be willing to work hard to promote our vision and mission; individuals who value clean water and natural areas, trails and community involvement. Especially needed are board members interested in fund raising. If you think you might be interested please contact Margot Ward at [Margot@ellerbecreek.org](mailto:Margot@ellerbecreek.org) for more information.

## New and Renewing Members

Kathi Beratan  
Marion Brisk  
Jane and James Finch  
Emily Friedman  
Rebecca Gibson  
Michael and Marilyn Helms  
Horse & Buggy Press



Donna McCarraher and Patricia Harading  
Sam Miglarese  
Peter Raabe  
Mary Ann Rood  
Kevin Quinlan  
Watts St. Baptist Church

## Please Support our Supporters ECWA's Business Sponsors



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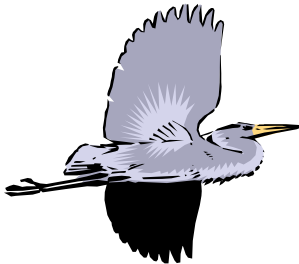
America Labor  
1308 Broad St.  
Durham, NC 27705

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



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Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association  
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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"/> \$ _____		
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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