

Overview

EEP uses a number of factors in determining a stream or wetland restoration site, including:

- Need for the project. EEP seeks sites that will offset unavoidable environmental damage from transportation improvements and other economic-development activities.
- Identification of the opportunity for water-quality improvement through EEP Local Watershed Planning.
- Ability to obtain the property and gain access for construction through a fee-simple sale, donation or conservation agreement with landowners.
- Restoration is in the best interest of the state of North Carolina, both environmentally and fiscally.

Stream Considerations

Sites being assessed for potential restoration projects must include permanent easements on both sides of the stream if the property owner is retaining ownership. EEP prefers 50-foot buffers (natural areas) on either side of the stream bank at a minimum. The stream must also be perennial (one that is constantly wet), and/or be designated in the National Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey or on a U.S. Geological Survey topographical map.

Streams may display certain characteristics to make them eligible for consideration, such as:

- Altered stream patterns – straightened, moved, or containing severe twists and turns (meanders).
- High amounts of sediment in the channel.
- Evidence of bank erosion, such as undercutting, exposed tree roots, or trees having fallen into the stream.
- Incised channels (very sharp, steep banks).
- Very shallow pools.
- Heavy deposits of sediment on narrow flats of land alongside the stream.

Additional Stream Considerations

Additional considerations when determining a stream-restoration project site:

- Number of utility lines and pipes crossing the stream.
- Number of bridges on the stream.
- Amount of land available on either side of the stream, adequate to build necessary twists and bends
- An amount of man-made material already in the stream (such as large rocks, also known as rip-rap; fabric used to hold the bank in place; or gabions, containers filled with stone.
- Slope of the land and flood plain.

Wetland Considerations

When assessing the potential for wetlands restoration, EEP first looks for hydric soils (soils that contain or have evidence of recently containing considerable amounts of water), as well as a change in (or removal of) the site's hydrology from its natural state – that is, the properties, distribution, use and circulation of water on a site. Wetlands also may display certain characteristics that may make them eligible for consideration such as:

- Ditches or canals, or drains such as pipes or tiles.
- Extremely vertical stream banks next to wetlands.
- Roads crossing wetlands.
- Removed vegetation.
- Drained, filled, or manipulated areas.
- Vegetation from nearby property that is a higher elevation and intrudes or encroaches into wetlands.



Additional Wetland Considerations

Also, EEP prefers wetland sites to be greater than five acres, but will consider smaller projects. Some additional considerations that EEP uses when determining to accept a wetland site are:

- Effects of neighboring land on the site.
- Presence of utility lines and pipes.
- Presence of invasive species (aggressive plants).

For more information

Landowners desiring consideration for EEP's initiatives must complete the Site Proposal Form. The Form is available on the EEP Web site at www.nceep.net/business/landowner/siteform.pdf or call (919) 715-0476 to speak with a property specialist.