

## Useful Terms and Definitions

<b>Buffers</b>	Natural areas on either side of a stream or wetland that help protect from erosion, or reduce runoff pollutants from entering the water.
<b>Conservation Easement</b>	Land-preservation agreement required by law on any property accepted by EEP to restore, enhance or protect water quality. Easements establish written, voluntary and amicable agreements between landowners and EEP, while allowing landowners to retain both title to the land, and freedom to sell or will the property. The agreements guarantee EEP's access to the property to ensure the success of projects and protection of the property, and may provide economic advantages to property owners in the form of tax credits and increased value. <i>It is important to note that conservation easements do not involve condemnation proceedings; take away property rights specifically reserved in the agreement; or require or imply public access to the property.</i>
<b>Ecosystem</b>	Plants, animals and other organisms <i>and</i> their habitat, functioning as a unit.
<b>Enhance</b>	To improve; to make better or more effective.
<b>Habitat</b>	An area in which plants or animals naturally live, grow and reproduce, and that provides adequate food, water, shelter and living space.
<b>Mitigate/Mitigation</b>	To make something less harsh or severe, diminishing or lessening harmful effects caused by other activities.
<b>Option Agreement</b>	A contract to purchase land or obtain a conservation easement that enables the buyer (such as EEP) to pay for the right to buy the land or easement at a later date at a specified price. It is useful if an owner is interested in selling but is not ready to sell, and/or the buyer is interested but is not ready to buy.
<b>Preserve</b>	To keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction; to protect.
<b>Restore/Restoration</b>	To repair or reestablish; to bring back to an original condition.
<b>Stream Enhancement</b>	Actions taken to improve water quality or habitat in and around streams.
<b>Stream Restoration</b>	Repairing a stream to return it to its natural condition; accomplished through a variety of methods including relocating the stream, recreating natural meanders (twists and turns), and adding materials such as boulders and tree roots to slow down water and decrease erosion.
<b>Watershed</b>	Land area that supplies water to a stream and its tributaries, from either direct runoff or groundwater, or both.
<b>Wetland Enhancement</b>	Actions taken to improve or increase water quality or habitat in a wetland.
<b>Wetland Restoration</b>	Repairing wetlands by plugging ditches and reconnecting adjacent stream channels to the floodplain; includes planting species that live in wet conditions and are necessary for a healthy wetland habitat.
<b>Wetland and Stream Preservation</b>	Long-term protection of naturally significant, high- quality wetlands and streams, generally leaving sites in their natural state, with minimal human disturbance or land-management activities.

For more information on the N.C. Ecosystem Enhancement Program, visit our Web site at [www.nceep.net](http://www.nceep.net) or call (919) 715-0476.

