

# N.C. Ecosystem Enhancement Program

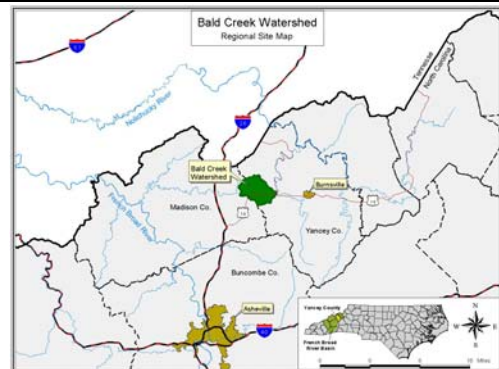
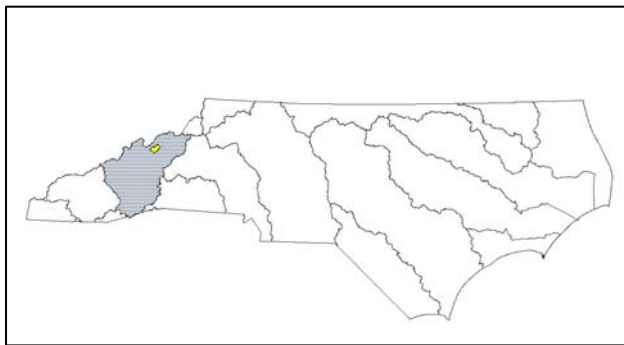


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## BALD CREEK LOCAL WATERSHED PLAN

### Fact Sheet

<b>Location:</b>	West of Burnsville, NC
<b>River Basin:</b>	French Broad
<b>Cataloging Unit:</b>	06010108
<b>14-digit Hydrologic Unit(s):</b>	06010108080020, 080010 and 050010
<b>County:</b>	Yancey
<b>Watershed Area:</b>	18 square miles (original study area); plus 59 sq. miles (Phase IV) = 77 mi <sup>2</sup>
<b>Planning Contact:</b>	Hal Bryson – Ecosystem Enhancement Program (828) 450-9408 or <a href="mailto:hal.bryson@ncdenr.gov">hal.bryson@ncdenr.gov</a>
<b>Stakeholder Involvement:</b>	Technical Advisory Committee of resource professionals and local residents
<b>Contractor Hired for Watershed Assessment</b>	Equinox Environmental Consultation and Design, Inc. Contact: Andy Brown, Steve Melton at (828) 253-6856 or <a href="mailto:andy@equinoxenvironmental.com">andy@equinoxenvironmental.com</a> , <a href="mailto:steve@equinoxenvironmental.com">steve@equinoxenvironmental.com</a>



### Project Overview

The Bald Creek watershed is a small rural watershed in the Toe-Cane River area characterized by steep ridges and narrow valleys. Most stream valleys are cleared for homes, gardens and small farms. Streams in the watershed often have very little woody riparian vegetation, coursing through fields or yards. Many of the steeper headwater areas remain forested.

Intensive stream monitoring and GIS assessment of the watershed demonstrated a number of water quality and habitat problems for watershed streams. Fecal coliform bacteria exceeded the NC standard in Bald Creek and major tributaries, and high nitrate levels were found in many streams, as well. The most likely sources of this contamination are straight pipes, problematic septic systems, and livestock waste. In 1999, the NC Division of Environmental Health's Wastewater Discharge Elimination Program surveyed household waste systems in the Bald Creek watershed, finding that 32% of households had inadequate waste systems.

In-stream habitat is degraded by excess sediment deposition, widespread channelization, and riparian vegetation removal. Trout and other fish species are limited by a lack of pools and quality riffles.



1652 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-27699-1652 / 919-715-0476 / [www.nceep.net](http://www.nceep.net)



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A set of recommendations have been developed to address these issues; these include:

- A. Restoration or enhancement of selected stream reaches and riparian areas;
- B. Preservation of key intact headwater forests;
- C. Straight-pipe elimination and upgrades to faulty septic systems;
- D. Fencing to exclude livestock from streams; and
- E. County promotion of proper site planning, sediment and erosion control, and best management practices (BMPs) to accompany residential development.

## **Project Schedule**

A preliminary watershed characterization was developed in 2003, and detailed GIS and field assessments were performed in 2004 and 2005. Recommendations for the watershed plan were overseen by a local Technical Advisory Committee, composed primarily of county natural resource and planning professionals and local residents. The watershed plan was presented to the Bald Creek community in December 2005 and completed in January 2006.

From spring 2006 through June 2007, the EEP/Equinox watershed team conducted landowner outreach and project site evaluation in order to implement priority stream and wetlands restoration projects in the Bald Creek watershed and adjacent hydrologic units (Indian-Price Creek, Middle Cane River, and Jacks Creek). This "Phase IV" effort has resulted in production of an Ecological Conditions Summary Report (August 2006), a Preservation Site Atlas (August 2006), and a Restoration Site Atlas (January 2007) for the expanded study area. Equinox also provided bi-weekly project status & landowner outreach summary reports to EEP staff throughout the Phase IV process.

## **Local Watershed Plan Reports**

[-Preliminary Watershed Characterization Report \[Feb. 2004\]](#)

***Bald Creek Local Watershed Plan [Jan. 2006]***

[-Executive Summary](#)

[-Full Plan](#)

[-Fact Sheet for Landowners](#)

***NC Div. of Water Quality  
Monitoring Reports***

[-Benthic macro-invertebrates](#)

[-Fish](#)

[-Water chemistry](#)

***Phase IV Documents***

[- Ecological Conditions Summary  
Report \[Aug. 2006\]](#)

[- Summary of Findings &  
Recommendations for the Bald  
Creek Local Watershed Plan](#)

