

Summary of Findings and Recommendations for the Rocky River (Upper & Middle) and Bear Creek Local Watershed Plan

Project Overview

In the summer of 2004, EEP initiated a Local Watershed Plan (LWP) in the upper Rocky River based on continuing high needs for compensatory mitigation in the Cataloging Unit (03030003), concerns of degraded water quality, and a screening for promising restoration sites. This drainage system includes northwestern Chatham County along with portions of Randolph and Alamance counties, an area encompassing three Hydrologic Units (HUs): upper Rocky River (HU 03030003070010), middle Rocky River (HU 03030003070020) and Bear Creek (HU 03030003070050). These HUs cover 177 square miles and, aside from Siler City, are largely rural. In 1998, Poor biological ratings in the middle Rocky River led to 14.4 miles of Tick and Loves creeks being listed as impaired waters by the State's DWQ. These degraded conditions persist. Urban and agricultural runoff combined with municipal discharges from Siler City are DWQ's cited stressors in these streams.

A technical advisory team consisting of local resource professionals and municipal staff from the counties and towns in the planning area was formed to help guide the watershed assessment and plan development work. This team also helped identify optimal watershed project sites with cooperative landowners for the establishment of long-term conservation easements. Watershed projects identified include traditional stream and stream buffer restoration/enhancement sites, wetlands and buffer preservation sites, and sites for the implementation of urban stormwater or agricultural best management practices (BMPs).

The watershed plan is complete. Reports on the project include The Preliminary Findings Report from February 2005 and the Detailed Assessment and Targeting of Management Report from May 2005. This report details recommendations on enhanced protections for perennial and intermittent streams; erosion and sediment control guidance; improved maps for streams and floodplains; and sites for preservation, restoration and BMP installation. Table 1 outlines the stressors and recommended actions from the LWP.

Table 1. Key watershed stressors and management strategies for the Upper and Middle Rocky River watersheds

Stressors and Issues	Management Strategies
Stream bank erosion	Stream restoration, riparian buffers, livestock exclusion
Lack of adequate forested buffer	Streamside buffer ordinances, improved stream maps, stream restoration, livestock exclusion, wetland restoration
Stormwater Runoff	Stormwater Retrofit, Enhanced Stormwater Utilities, BMPs, Low impact development (LID), Non-structural stormwater controls
Livestock access to streams	Livestock exclusion
Floodplain development	Floodplain ordinance to limit floodplain develop
Herbicides & pesticides	Stormwater BMPs, reduced herbicide and insecticide usage.
Nutrients	Ag BMPs, riparian buffers, stormwater BMPs, improved wastewater treatment.
Fecal coliform bacteria	Agricultural BMPs, stormwater BMPs
Poor development practices	Limit areas of disturbance, improved erosion and sediment control education, steep slope protection

Project Stakeholders

Table 2 provides a listing of the groups and individuals were participants in the watershed plan.

Table 2. LWP Participants

Organization	Stakeholders
Town of Siler City	Jack Meadows
WRC	Shari Bryant
SWCD-Chatham	Henry Outz, Sherry Scully
Chatham County Planning	Keith Megginson
NCSU Cooperative Extension	Christy Perrin, Sam Grace
NRCS	Bill Woods
Deep River Project	Tom Duckwall/Friends of the Deep River
TJCOG	Sydney Miller
Friends of the Rocky River	Diana Hales
Triangle Land Conservancy	Tandy Jones