

# **SWEARING CREEK WATERSHED MEETING**

**June 16, 2015**

<b>Participants:</b>	Shari Bryant, NC Wildlife Resources Commission	Gisele Comer, City of Lexington
	Guy Cornman, Davidson County Planning	Joy Fields, PTRC
	Scott Leonard, Davidson County Planning	Brooke Massa, NC Wildlife Resources Commission
	Andy Miller, Davidson County Soil & Water Conservation District	Eglantina Minerali, City of Lexington
	Lloyd Phillips, Davidson County Soil & Water Conservation District	Chris Phelps, Tourism-Recreation Investment Partnership for Davidson County
	Roger Spach, City of Lexington	Nancy Stairs, NC Forest Service
	Cy Stober, PTRC	

## **Introduction**

Guy Cornman opened before the meeting began that he would like opinion of folks on letter from Yadkin River Keeper Regarding the Rowan County Duke Power site to be supportive of the Yadkin River Keeper on concerns for site restoration.

Shari Bryant had received a call for information from consultant for scoping study on cleanup.

## **Agenda Review**

Joy Fields reviewed the agenda for the meeting which included introductions for all stakeholders and a short synopsis for what their interest was for Swearing Creek Watershed Plan, drafting and agreeing on an Outreach Goal for the plan, brainstorming activities to meet outreach goal, and agreeing on a strategy for the outreach, followed by a short review of the maps that have been created to date.

## **Goals for Swearing Creek**

- Scott- County wide buffers on all streams
- Shari – Protecting terrestrial and aquatic wildlife in watershed
- Chris – Water quality to ensure safe water for daughter to swim and fish in. Comes from Swearing Creek Watershed and uses it regularly

- Roger – Protect water quality on Swearing Creek
- Guy – Another tool in kit for major development in the county; have tools for High Rock Lake tourism and recreational support.
- Andy – develop mechanism to involve all landowners in protecting and restoring water quality in a non-regulatory way
- Nancy – Project in High Rock Lake Watershed that assesses land cover with water quality, seeking opportunities for new projects
- Eglantina – Manages samples taken on Swearing Creek and right now it looks good and hopes to keep Swearing Creek clean
- Lloyd – Protect and improve water quality
- Gisele – Water quality, testing on Swearing Creek
- Brooke – Assist communities with providing tools- regulations and incentives in the watershed if communities want them.

#### **Outreach Goal to encompass and address all interests of Stakeholders**

- Joy; what outreach strategy will meet all these diverse needs?
- Cy – Issues of lake and creek are different – their uses are pretty different- that may demand different outreach strategies
- Shari – different fisheries but any creek improvements will benefit lake and water quality
  - What will protect Water Quality? Brooke’s Green Growth Toolbox that recommends stormwater management and buffers
- Scott – Lake is a priority for all stakeholders and requiring buffers on tributaries is an easier sale than on the properties right on the lake.
- Chris: Impacts to lake are likelier on tributaries
- Lloyd- you Must have participation on lake or it will lead to resentment
- Guy – ALCOA’s lake management plan addresses the lake and requires 100 foot setbacks
- Andy – High Rock Lake Watershed is huge and Davidson County is a small part of it so we need to focus on tributaries BUT most folks don’t care about tributaries’ conditions as long as High Rock Lake is clean.
- Chris- Need simple education that prevents pollution on tributaries, there is a huge lack of good behavior and knowledge on tributaries, the focus is on the lake
- Lloyd – Absolutely need to focus on tributaries and their connection to High Rock Lake but NOT High Rock Lake. Too Big
- Nancy – Broadcast efforts to US neighbors so that High Rock Lake is improved. Example \*Talking Trees from WA\* where a haircut (topping) is deadly.
- Joy; Outreach Focus – Connect Residents to creeks and the creeks to High Rock Lake. Provide them with tools to improve water quality
- Scott – Likes the messaging, but that will be easier. Focus on fishing spots throughout creeks, send mail to Creekside property owners. Need to discuss tools more – what tools?
- Shari – Echoes Scott, connect people to their backyard and the life in the creek.
  - Scott – What IS back there, what uses my land
  - Shari – Make connection to High Rock Lake – US message

- Scott – Years ago during a cleanup at the landfill a fish swam between his wading boots and he still remembers that. If fish can live at a landfill they can survive nearly anywhere!
- Chris – Tools will be challenging. How do we cater to different landowners. Some folks think it is goot to spray roundup on the riparian buffer zone because that is what a buffer is. Need basic education on yard maintenance. Landowners must feel that they are helping the “Cause” and part of the efforts for creek restoration.
- Roger – Must be an ongoing process
- Guy – Need to include youth in outreach. They put pressure on parents
- Andy – Agree with everything so far. We are asking to change behaviors inherited from prior generations. Chris is right they can’t be accused of bad behavior.
- Nancy – It is a BIG outreach goal that probably needs to be refined to a specific message. Needs to have different messages for different landowners/stakeholders i.e. users of the creek, landowners, industry. What does a healthy creek look like? What does a sick creek look like?
- Eglantina – Very important to educate public on best practices and what penalties/fines are for intentional harm.
- Lloyd – General goal is simple awareness. Not a connection to water especially down near lake. Greensboro /Guilford county has a successful “Don’t Dump” campaign and stream markings. Fertilizer campaign needed for residences.
- Gisele – Reach out to All landowners, especially High Rock Lake landowners.
- Brooke - Creating messages is a great first step, but determine who the different audiences are, each with a customized campaign. A general campaign to “Raise Awareness” is great. Broader goal with refined objectives and supporting strategies.
  - Chris – echoes this, focus on residents living in very different watersheds
- Cy – City and Rural Outreach Campaigns, 1 umbrella but with some different focuses.
- Lloyd: The more specific you get, the more careful you are going to have to be with outreach materials catering to specific local issues.
- Guy – We do have individuals who could run with the outreach campaign and make it an advocacy entity
- Lloyd+Brooke – Match your tools to your audience
- Chris – Boone’s cave program with adopt-a-stream is perfect. Not sure how you transfer to other constituencies like the boating community.
- Cy – Make materials easily adaptable.
- Andy – How do we motivate people to do the right thing? How do we make folks feel guilty or afraid (fines) of not doing the right thing. What is the measured success of GSO’s no dumping campaign?
  - Cy – Will check into it
- Joy – Programs, demonstration projects, campaigns? Everything? Whatever changes the norm.
- Joy – Does the behavior change need to be in the goal?
- Guy – yes
- Nancy – Is that the goal or the strategy?

- Chris – Big task to change social norms. But you have to confront/present issue so it is discussed. Climate change is a good example. People may not agree but they're talking about it. Environmental issues are bigger now than in a lifetime. We need to get people talking.
  - Guy – To initiate discussion. Build up a town hall style meeting.
  - Shari - what is the incentive for most folks to change behavior?
  - Gisele – Start by using organizations that are already out there. Like the River Rats
  - Chris – Not seen as a political or environmental group. Great place to start.
  - Nancy – Audubon's backyard habitats program gets at another motivation and improves water quality.
  - Joy - Revised Outreach Goal and took ideas from stakeholders

**Final Outreach Goal:** Create multiple targeted messages and programs that increase citizen's awareness that swearing creek supports life, is connected to High Rock Lake and impacts the lake.

**Brainstorming Results:** Brainstorming for outreach activities to meet the goal began and the following was identified:

- Use Social Media such as Facebook to communicate this
- Expand existing City utility bill inserts to grab people's attention and address these goals. Presently the April insert addresses stormwater.
- Social Media Outreach
  - Identify pages, groups, organizations, businesses or individuals that have a large audience that can be reached with a social media campaign
  - Promote and engage in discussions that educate, directly or indirectly, water quality issues.
- Identify and engage groups of people that may have an interest or impact and tailor programs to their interests
  - Fishermen
  - Recreational Boaters
  - Kayakers
  - Waterfront Homeowners
  - Farmers
  - Hunters etc.
- Have local meetings with landowners to discuss concerns of the creek and how they think problems can be addressed.
- Use print ads in newspaper or local print media Ads on local/cable TV to reach masses.
- Involve other groups that benefit or will benefit from improved water quality of High Rock Lake
- TV programs or commercials about water pollution and the effect of it on everyday life, health.
- Raise awareness about the fines that they may face for polluting the waters.
- Send info with the Utility bill
- Reach the owners on the creek
- Adapt backyard habitat program for Davidson County

- Provide webpage/site to sign up take and post photos and engage in effort
- Disperse information on a living vs dying creek and what homeowners can do.
- Offer localized workshops on stream bank restoration
- Organize localized clean-up opportunities with awards for biggest pile, fastest, biggest team, strangest piece etc.
- Reach businesses on creek - backyard habitat, what are they doing with or in creek, materials friendly? Sponsorship of clean-up activities?
- Fish painting at storm drains
- Municipal sponsored info in utility bills that is brief, catchy and point to website via QR code
- Logo on materials to show buy-in
- Hold a town hall style forum on water quality issues with experts in attendance to solicit input from citizens/residents in the area
- Develop environmental curriculum at the middle or high school level so the children are educated on impacts of bad habits and can then influence their parents.
- Develop a series of simple TV ads to run on cable TV that addresses simple tasks the average homeowner can do to cut down on contamination of water quality.
- School programs to inform students what they can do.
- Demonstration sites showing what can be done to make an impact
- Signage placed to make the general public aware of the consequences of their actions
- Incentives to encourage the desired behavior
- Demonstrating/showing the economic impacts of taking action vs doing nothing
- Use local people who are known and respected in their community – the more grassroots the better
- Message that describes forested riparian buffer benefits such as protecting or improving water quality, protecting aquatic habitat, and travel corridor for wildlife
- Organize stream clean ups
- Message that discusses stormwater impacts to water quality for local governments and citizens (e.g. fertilizer on yards etc)
- Brochures mailed to each property owner along swearing creek, educating them on the life of the creek and the importance of their stewardship.
- Create and place signs at each bridge crossing, identifying the watershed and its importance or need for quality.
- Use groups that are meeting now and educate them on water quality of the creeks and High Rock Lake
- Start a club at local Community Colleges and High schools on protecting creeks and High Rock Lake.
- Mail out to landowners all program or groups that will educate on water quality
- Organize regular clean-ups (quarterly, monthly?)
- Develop a citizen science program of water quality monitoring
- Develop a citizen science program on bird monitoring in parks along creeks

- Develop curriculum for elementary schools on stream wildlife, water quality, and pollution sources
- Meet with interested stakeholder to introduce outreach program ideas and ask groups to lead/assist in implementation efforts
- Address dumping issues? Free pick-ups?
- Present to Davidson County and Lexington Planning Boards and Councils on project and buffers
- Pursue funding for Davidson County Community College tiered water quality project as a demonstration project
- Send out fliers or brochures on backyard and buffer maintenance in fall when leaves are on ground
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Stakeholders will identify outreach priorities through a survey monkey format and will agree on a strategy at the next meeting.

**Maps:**

Stakeholders were given a packet of maps to review and provide feedback on prior to the next meeting. Stakeholders were asked to identify if there were maps missing, extra maps or edits needed for any of the maps. The Swearing Creek website: [www.ptrc.org/swearingcreek](http://www.ptrc.org/swearingcreek) was visited and the interactive map was demonstrated.

Meeting was adjourned.