

## Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partnership (Project) Meeting

October 20, 2017 from 12:00 pm- 2:30 pm at Walnut Creek Wetland Center

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### Meeting Notes

Participants: Anne Franklin, PEJ; Stacie Hagwood, WCWP; Amin Davis, NCDWR; Bill Flournoy, Triangle Greenways Council; Kevin Boyer, City of Raleigh Stormwater; Peter Raabe, American Rivers; David Shouse, City of Raleigh Parks, Rec, and Cultural Resources; Nicole Wilkinson, Water Resources Research Institute (WRII); Christy Perrin, WRII.

The group enjoyed lunch together before meeting.

**Action item:** Participants want to change this group's name to "Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partners". Everyone present agreed. We'll send it out to the list to see if there are any objections to the change. It would just require us updating the website and materials moving forward. The URL already has "partners" in the name. **(Post-meeting follow-up: Name was changed to "Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partnership", to distinguish it more from "Partners for Environmental Justice")**

**Action item:** Let Christy or Louie know if you have any questions/feedback/suggestions for moving forward with the new Conservation Fund/JPB Foundation project (see page 3 for description). Community members (starting with members from Walnut Creek Wetland Park Community Planning Committee) will be invited to serve on an Advisory committee to convene in early 2018 and meet quarterly. [lrivers@ncsu.edu](mailto:lrivers@ncsu.edu) [Christy\\_perrin@ncsu.edu](mailto:Christy_perrin@ncsu.edu)

Summary of discussion items include the Walnut Creek Wetland Park planning process, Neighborhood Ecology Corps project, storytelling and watershed planning, and an overview and ideas for moving forward with a new grant received from Conservation Fund/JPB Foundation. This summary follows:

- **Walnut Creek Wetland Park Planning process, other park updates- Stacie Hagwood**
  - Alta Consultants, hired by Raleigh, is finishing a concept plan for the Park. Posters of the final concept plan were shared.
  - The Citizen Planning Committee or CPC (many from this group are on it) met 5 times. Their highest priority is connecting the southern neighborhoods with the park.
  - Will cost \$10-\$12 million to implement the whole plan.
  - City has \$700,000 from the bond in hand to implement a first phase.
  - Stacie felt the committee members had the same core mission, with minor preferences based on their interests. It was gratifying to watch.
  - Members from the CPC said they wanted to express in the plan that the park is connected to a bigger ecosystem- the watershed, outside the boundaries
  - Will CPC see document before finalized? City staff said they should.
  - Will plan include strategies for funding and partnerships? (for ex water quality)
  - The green streets part could be a capital project from the City's Stormwater dept.
- **Storytelling and watershed planning- continuing discussion started at our spring meeting**

- The group is still interested in pushing forward a comprehensive story-telling effort, beginning at the bottom of the watershed and heading upstream. They are also interested in planning with other watershed stakeholders
- PEJ is moving forward with a documentary. City of Raleigh created mini-videos about the St Ambrose rain garden and their cost share program, posted here:

<https://www.raleighnc.gov/services/content/PWksStormwater/Articles/StormwaterQualityCostShareProgram.html>

- Storytelling ideas
  - Short stories will help sell what we are trying to do, example - talking to Council
  - Invite NPR Storycorps- they set up at Hunt Library last year
  - Dr. Alan, UNC History Dept. as a potential partner
  - Kwesi Brookins had ideas for NCSU graduate student(s) to participate (see last summary)
- Watershed planning ideas
  - NCSU professor Terri Litzenberger's class data- 6 semesters of water quality data so far
  - Girls in Science collects species data
  - WRRRI work study student compiled a list/summary of watershed data we could find- will post online at our website
  - NCDWR is developing an online tool that's storymap based, can collect water quality data, photos, act as a watershed clearinghouse. (Cam McNutt has a beta version)
  - Meet with City of Raleigh and Town of Cary staff to look at watershed holistically
  - WRRRI has research grants- we could potentially develop our research priorities to include in their Request for Proposals. Attract creative attention.
  - Walnut Creek is considered impaired for PCBs. Likely has other impairments.
  - PCBs were buried under a parking lot on S. Saunders St. (in 70's?)
  - Focus on celebrating Creek as an urban jewel - high quality resources are here
- **Partners for Environmental Justice documentary- Amin Davis**
  - Purpose is to tell the history of PEJ, about the creation of the Wetland Center, and the current and future efforts that have led from PEJ's work. Filmmaker Melvin Estrella came twice to film, most recently to capture a stream clean-up and the potluck dinner with Akima Price.
  - Melvin is making a 5-6 minute video, but thinks the story needs 16 min to be told well. The draft of the short video will be available this year.

- Additional funds are needed to make the 16 min. video. Longer than that = too much \$\$
- **Neighborhood Ecology Corps Fall project- funded by American Rivers/Pisces Foundation- Christy Perrin, Amin Davis (Randy Senzig is a partner as well)**
  - Conduct some basic streamflow monitoring (estimating height during storms) of neighborhood streams, and on Little Rock Creek in the park. Dr. Ryan Emanuel, Theo Jass are doing the stream monitoring. One sensor has already been installed on Little Rock Creek.
  - Green infrastructure workshops with NEC/Center for Human and Earth Restoration. Students attended a workshop 10/19 at St. Ambrose Church to learn about stormwater runoff, how green infrastructure can reduce runoff while providing other benefits; identify potential locations for green infrastructure projects at and/or around Fuller Elementary School. See photo on p. 2. They will teach their parents about stormwater and green infrastructure, and share what they found at a workshop on Nov.2.
  - Wayne Shore, Math/Science Specialist at Fuller Elementary- he may be interested in getting involved, he runs an afterschool Science Olympiad
- **New grant through Conservation Fund/JPB Foundation -Christy Perrin**
  - Our group was invited by Conservation Fund (CF) in spring to join their application for a “Parks with Purpose” grant from the JPB Foundation. With a day to respond, Christy emailed active WCWCP participants to see if we should, and ideas for potential project sites. Response was positive so a 1-page long description of our goal/efforts was included. We were informed late September that they (and we) did get the grant.
  - *Purpose of grant (from CF proposal): We will seek to build the capacity of organizations operating at the community level in economically and socially distressed areas of each city (Baltimore, Durham, Atlanta, Washington, D.C. are also included). The goal is to create new park and greenway resources along with new community-based capacity. These new greenspaces will provide safe places for kids to play and families to gather, support training and employment for residents, and improve overall quality of life for those that live, work and play in the neighborhoods that benefit from these new and much needed greenspaces. Each project will incorporate storm water management features to reduce flooding and water pollution that negatively impacts residents in these neighborhoods.*
  - Amount for WCWCP: \$40,000/year for 2 years for engagement, planning and design, \$250,000 for implementing a project- to use as catalyzing funds.
  - Suggested process- Community Advisory Committee/Tech Committee to be formed and meet 4 times in 2018, to determine criteria for selecting a project and help identify and design a project site. Conservation Fund can support process with additional technical support (assistance with community engagement, creating maps for example).



- What type of park facility can the project fund? The project can be an enhancement to an existing park or greenway, a new stand-alone facility, or a series of small green infrastructure projects. It can be located on a municipal, school, or non-profit property.
- *Comments from group about what to do with this project include:*
  - Beware of planning fatigue- don't tax people too much, there are already groups together doing similar work, they could be involved.
  - Love engaging Shaw and NEC students- include stipends for NEC to keep them engaged, create a pipeline for careers in natural resources
  - Creating training/careers- consider hiring companies who do apprenticeship programs
  - Consider engaging Youth Conservation Corps, or an Americorps position, with Conservation Trust for North Carolina.
  - Could funds be balanced- use some of \$ to move priority parts of Walnut Creek Wetland Park plan forward/connectivity or resources for neighborhoods to the south; then some of funds to connect the work with the larger watershed? Through an assessment/gathering stories/increasing understanding.
  - Could we do something on south side of creek, recreation/removing invasives, build the story there to make the bridge a compelling argument
  - Somebody should be accountable (and paid) to manage community engagement- long term person, consistency of face, follow-up. Preferably a local person. Make it a real position. This needs to be done well.
  - We could fund something important but not deemed high priority in the new Park Plan- something that wouldn't get funds right away. The community garden would be good for getting community involvement, show on the ground progress. Let City take care of the bridge?
  - These ideas about what project(s) to fund can be presented to the advisor committee for discussion.
- Suggestions for who to reach out to involve, in addition to the Park Committee members
  - State St. Community Church
  - Mo Johnson, Garner Rd Community Center (formerly a YMCA)- he's devoted to the youth who use that facility
  - SE Raleigh Promise (non-profit overseeing the new YMCA site/school/etc). See who the partners are
  - Passage Home? Haven't heard from them in a while. They own some rental units. They did not engage in the Chavis Park Conversation though were invited.
  - Attend PEJ to share with entire group. They meet 7pm on 1<sup>st</sup> Weds of odd months.
- Draft budget items include: some NCSU staff time (Perrin/Rivers) to administer/coordinate; undergraduate stipend(s) for Shaw and/or NCSU students; part-time/internship position funding; Neighborhood Ecology Corps support; travel to peer exchanges, some materials/printing, food for meetings.
- Christy and Louie will take these suggestions moving forward with project. If any groups/individuals represented here need funding to be involved, or you have other

suggestions about this project, please send them to Christy or Louie: [lrivers@ncsu.edu](mailto:lrivers@ncsu.edu)  
[Christy\\_perrin@ncsu.edu](mailto:Christy_perrin@ncsu.edu)

- **Rochester Heights/Biltmore hills survey (relayed from Dresden McGregor, who was unable to attend)**
  - The group ran out of time to review Dresden's update. A handout of her powerpoint update was provided. She is still collecting surveys and anticipates having her analysis/results completed in January or February.
  - Let Louie know if you have any questions to relay back to Dresden.

[go.ncsu.edu/WalnutCreekWetlandpartners](http://go.ncsu.edu/WalnutCreekWetlandpartners)