

Urban Parks With Purpose Community Task Force Meeting Summary

April 9, 2018 | St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

Introductions and background

The Urban Parks with Purpose Community Task Force met for the first time on April 9. Eighteen people participated, representing:

- Biltmore Hills
- Conservation Fund
- Fuller Elementary School
- Institute for Landscape Art and Sustainable Places (ILASS)
- Neighborhood Ecology Corps (NEC)/Center for Human and Earth Restoration
- NC State University (College of Natural Resources, Water Resources Research Institute)
- Partners for Environmental Justice
- Rochester Heights

This new project arose from the work of the [Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partnership](#) (the Partnership), an informal but coordinated collaboration between communities around the wetlands, NCSU, City of Raleigh, and non-profits. The Conservation Fund included the Partnership in their *Urban Parks with Purpose* Grant from JPB Foundation. NCSU administers the 2-year grant, which has funds for planning (\$40,000/year) and implementation (\$250,000). The goals are to engage community in identifying and building a park or greenway facility that benefits community and the environment, focuses on equity, and provides educational, career, and training opportunities throughout the project. The facility can be part of an existing park or greenway, a stand-alone facility, or multiple smaller facilities in the community. The grant funds time for NCSU coordinators, a part-time employee at NCSU College of Natural Resources, a student intern at Shaw University, engagement of the Neighborhood Ecology Corps, and design/construction (or part of it, depending on the project's scope). The Community Task Force will make decisions, with Technical Advisors providing information and suggestions to help guide them. The Technical Advisory Committee will join the Task Force at their June meeting.

Christy Perrin and Louie Rivers shared an overview of the Partnership's work with the community in the last couple years, including focus groups and a door to door survey of Biltmore Hills and Rochester Heights residents to learn views on stormwater; education about and installation of green infrastructure (a rain garden) at St. Ambrose Episcopal Church; NEC engagement; and stream flow monitoring. Dresden McGregor presented preliminary results of her survey, which included a map indicating areas in the community that flood during heavy rain

events. Ryan Emanuel and Theo Jass presented results of recent stream flow monitoring in the community. Much of this work was supported by grants from American Rivers. The information was shared to inform the Task Force on neighborhood engagement and data collected.

After this project is successfully in the ground, what is happening?

The above question was posed to participants to prompt their ideas about goals and possible benefits of the project. The full list of ideas are included in an attached chart. Some ideas included: community/youth education, sustainable management of wetlands and natural resources, development of the surrounding human community, gathering of community information, implementation of green infrastructure, and development of youth leadership.

Topics discussed during the meeting included

- *Nuisance flooding areas in the community* and methods to map/track them were considered, and whether the grant should help relieve that flooding. Environmental justice issues in areas vulnerable to flooding and concerns of institutional and social trust as they relate to environmental racism were raised. Project staff are committed to engaging with community members to ensure that they feel they are being represented appropriately, particularly considering the historical neglect of local voices and wisdom.
- *Fuller Elementary School is proposed for renovation.* A design firm has been hired to develop a design, meetings have been held with parents and faculty to get ideas. Two ideas raised include a complete rebuild, and changing the entrances to State Street. It will be in a bond referendum put to Wake County voters this fall. If the bond passes, renovation will happen in the 2019-2020 school year. Involving Wake County planners in our project makes sense-school locations have great potential for green infrastructure.
- *Funds for this project's implementation* could be used to find matching funds if needed, such as through the City of Raleigh's Rainwater Rewards cost share program.
- *ILASS seeks students and a project in the community* for their 2018 summer camp.

The next meeting will be held Monday, June 11 at 5:30PM
at St. Ambrose Episcopal Church
Darby St., Raleigh, NC-27610

For information about the Urban Park with Purpose Community Task Force or Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partnership, contact Christy Perrin at Christy_perrin@ncsu.edu or Louie Rivers at livers@ncsu.edu

Goal category Goal	COMMUNITY EDUCATION	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS	COMMUNITY BENEFITS	YOUTH EDUCATION	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Avoid future flood devastation		✓	✓		
Environmental enhancement through ongoing community programs/festivals	✓	✓	✓		✓
Use education as a tool to control flooding	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Intergenerational aspect to the project			✓		
Use art to show environmental problems and solutions	✓	✓	✓		
Create projects to showcase existing businesses					✓
Provides opportunity for job training			✓		✓

Goal category Goal	COMMUNITY EDUCATION	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS	COMMUNITY BENEFITS	YOUTH EDUCATION	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Walnut Creek bank restoration/cleanup (Garner – State)		✓			
Prevent runoff into Little Rock and Walnut Creeks		✓			
Creation of pollinator habitats and preservation of soil		✓	✓		
Access to Walnut Creek, community events there			✓		
Informative Tree Trail	✓			✓	
Integration of green stormwater infrastructure at Fuller or Carnage Schools		✓	✓		
A local park engages local minorities in environmental activities	✓		✓		

Goal category Goal	COMMUNITY EDUCATION	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS	COMMUNITY BENEFITS	YOUTH EDUCATION	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
K-12 research opportunities				✓	
Site attracts visitors			✓		