

Parks With Purpose Community Task Force Newsletter and Meeting Summary

May 6, 2019 Meeting | Norman and Betty Camp Education Center

May meeting participants: Kevin Boyer, Eric Butler, Bettie Camp, Norman Camp Jr., Frances Carmichael-Jones, Claire Cooney, Amin Davis, Yazmin Fozard, Bill Flournoy, Charles Francis, Claudia Graham, Stacie Hagwood, Bill Holman, Kristi Moyer, David Proper, Christy Perrin, Louie Rivers, Randy Senzig, Sarah Shefte, Wayne Shore,

Task Force Actions and Decisions

- A memorandum of agreement between the City of Raleigh and The Conservation Fund is needed
- The Conservation Fund staff will draft request for proposals from design engineers/landscape architects (after the June 3 meeting)
- Create a matrix of potential park elements to help evaluate options
- Next meeting is June 3 at 5:30pm at the Walnut Creek Wetland Park



Photo of Betty Camp by Justin Kase Conder from Walter Magazine

Parks with Purpose Team Updates

- We will meet again on June 3rd then take a break for 2-3 months
- Mud Day is May 18 from 10am-2pm
- Claudia received a Fletcher Award for being an outstanding city of Raleigh parks volunteer
- A Shaw University student will be employed by Eric Butler to assess wildlife in the park this summer (mammals, birds, insects).
- Walter Magazine published an article about the Walnut Creek Wetland Park and PEJ. <https://www.waltermagazine.com/explore/walnut-creek-wetland-center/>

Meeting Summary

Discussion about grant possibilities for selected site and Alta assessment tasks

The Task Force learned that the contractor for the current work at the Park (Alta) were requested by the City to provide some assessment on the Bailey Drive site. Some questions were raised regarding what they were assessing (we haven't selected projects yet), why it's needed since wetlands and floodway have already been delineated, and why the Parks with

Purpose project would need to wait for the information to move forward? Since Alta already had a contract with the City, it was easy to add some tasks while they were already working in order to help inform the City about the idea to add trails on the south side. The work dovetailed with the type of work they are doing on the north side of the creek, and includes determining the minimum length and cost of boardwalk required to cross the wetlands to the banks of Walnut Creek, and the feasibility and cost of constructing stairs to access State St. from the property. The city needs to conduct this study regardless of our project but we may benefit from some of the knowledge generated by the study. It seems unlikely to highlight our best options but will likely help us eliminate aspects of our plans that are not feasible with this project budget and timeline. The assessments are useful for the city so that different modeling scenarios to estimate flooding impact can be created.

The group confirmed that the elements that can go on the site are not determined yet, but it would be helpful to have a matrix of potential park elements that includes- what can be done and what information is needed to determine what can be done? What are potential costs? The amount in the PWP grant for implementation is \$250,000. This will have to cover the design, permits, assessments as well as construction costs. The Conservation Fund will continue to try to raise more funds, including with an additional proposal to the current funder, JPB Foundation. An upcoming opportunity is with the Raleigh Appearance Commission- they have some funds that they may be able to provide to help/ David Proper and Claire Cooney will meet with them to explore possibilities.

College of Design Landscape Architecture classes final results

Christy provided a powerpoint presentation with the results from Kofi Boone's landscape architecture class projects, highlighting results that the Task Force had not seen yet. The report is at https://wrri.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Parks-with-Purpose-Summary_Final_v2.pdf

Family Fun Day (Feb. 16 worksop) results:

Visual preference activity:

- Safety: preferences for clear lines of sight and few obstructions to natural surveillance
- Walking: no patterns identified
- Learning about nature: preferences favored immersion in/contact with natural features

Design game results:

- Shelters and seating: all participants included seating and shelter in their visions. These could be considered important programmatic elements
- Meadow landscape: although they could have selected lawn, most participants chose meadow (grasses mixed with flowers) as their preferred ground plane

March 18 Task Force workshop Park Diorama results:

- Top choices for words selected were **ecology, community, intergenerational**
- Most frequently picked elements
 - **Boardwalk (different boardwalk pictures were selected by many)**
 - Street rain garden
 - Tree

- Walkway with flowers
- Expression tunnel (mural)
- Pond
- Family picnic (+one who picked a picnic table)
- Terraced amphitheater
- Outdoor play area
- Kids climbing tree
- Man and boy walking

Diorama interview results:

- Individuals want project to have a natural aesthetic, to feel immersed in nature. Structural components (places to sit, learn, observe) should blend with nature.
- Have an interactive component where artists/residents are able to create and recreate elements of the park (free expression tunnel, murals, re-paintable chairs)
- Project should be a “show stopper” with a “grand entrance” that draws attention and motivates and inspires further development of the park
- Results show community’s preference on bringing the south side forward, intergenerationally, and education.

Wetland Park Inventory from George Hess’ Natural Resources Measurements Class

Dr. Hess’ NR Measurements worked with Stacie to conduct studies on several topics relevant to the Park. Christy shared most of the natural resource measurements class presentations. Their final report is at https://wrri.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Hess_NR-Measurements_WCWPIInventoryFinalDraft.2019.04.30_reduced.pdf This work included invasive plant (privet) inventory, trail alignments (shown in figure E4), water quality, wildlife, (feasibility of garden/nature play was studied but not shown during the meeting). The group discussed the pros and cons of trail locations shown. The presentation also prompted a useful discussion about invasive species in the area, namely Chinese privet and the unique challenges this plant can create for trail maintenance. The presentations also reported good water quality in Rock Creek. Comments about trail alignment included:

- The students’ trail alignments were based on topography-places where they could walk, and did not include places where boardwalks could go
- There are elements (plants) in the wetland you would want people to experience

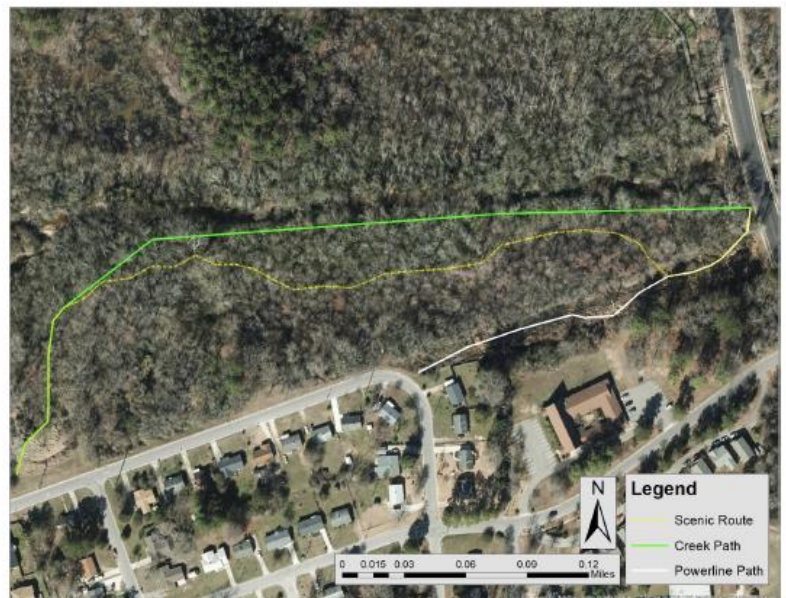


Figure E4. Three proposed pathways to connect the south side of Walnut Creek Wetland Park to the rest of the park and the Walnut Creek Wetland Center.

- We should identify important natural elements (like tree species/clusters) to highlight, then design the trail
- Mulch trails presented- upkeep requires replacing mulch once/year with volunteers (the Ross Andrews Trail is mulched for example).
- Trail placement is a balance between where you can walk, where you would put boardwalk
- With no sidewalks in the neighborhood, how do you get people there safely? Use a trail as an alternative to sidewalk along Bailey. Connect St. Ambrose with a trail.
- School busses currently drive along Bailey and turn onto Baoz (yikes!). As part of Fuller Elementary's renovation, they will come off of State St. instead. (phew!). Will be safer.
- An example of State Park planning includes park rangers knowledgeable of the park mapping the best topography for trails.

Comments about invasive plant removal included:

- Invasive plants in the park are cut by volunteer teams and then sprayed with herbicide by City of Raleigh certified staff.
- This may best be contractual work as it's a huge job, particularly if debris is hauled off.
- Best practice along streambanks is to start removals upstream and move downstream, plant to replace removed vegetation (to prevent erosion, replace with native understory).
- Engage a professional who understands invasive species management
- The ecological benefits provided by invasive plants need to be considered and replaced as the plants are removed- these include wildlife habitat, erosion control. This is a wilderness surrounded by an urban area.
- It will be an ongoing maintenance requirement.

Water quality inventory discussion: The students' results showed a spike in E.Coli along Little Rock Creek, possibly from leaky sanitary sewers- rain gets into sewer pipes and some sewage leaks out into streams. Could also be from pet waste. The finding of more darters and shiners (more sensitive fish species) shows there may be a move towards cleaner water quality in other constituents besides E.Coli. E.Coli impacts human health but not aquatic life.

Shaw University involvement

Eric Butler will employ a student this summer to study wildlife in the Park. Their work could include collecting summer bird data (all data so far has been collected during annual bird counts at other times of year), assessing insect diversity, updating or creating field guides.

The next meeting will be held **Monday, June 3 at 5:30PM**
at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center
 950 Peterson 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 919-513-1152

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