
BOLIN CREEK WATERSHED RESTORATION PLAN

NOVEMBER 1, 2012



PREFACE

The intention of this plan is to support those who reside or work in or near Bolin Creek, or have a responsibility or an ethic to be a steward of Bolin Creek, to take concrete actions to improve the condition of Bolin Creek. What exactly does that mean? First, the focus is on the creek and the aquatic organisms that live in the creek. The creek obviously does not exist in a vacuum, so caring for the land, plants, animals, and yes, people, in the watershed cannot be dismissed or disconnected from care for the creek. However, care for the land, terrestrial plants, animals, and people and care for the water do have distinct differences. For example, invasive plants eradication may be desirable for a variety of non-creek oriented reasons, but these pioneer plants may in fact be filling, at least temporarily, a restorative niche from an aquatic perspective in the watershed by stabilizing stream banks, working and protecting the soil and helping mitigate hydrologic disruptions. Similarly, meeting human needs for recreational enjoyment and municipal infrastructure are clearly valued, but what is the proper balance when these values compromise aquatic health through hydrologic modification, increased erosion and sedimentation, habitat disruption, and pollutant delivery? Ultimately, the success of this plan and its beneficial ongoing evolution will be a function of finding ways to integrate the plan with all of the other interests in the community and watershed for health and wellbeing. As Wendell Berry wisely observed:

Because a community is, by definition, placed, its success cannot be divided from the success of its place, its soil, forests, grasslands, plants and animals, water, light, and air. The two economies, the natural and the human, support each other; each is the other's hope of a durable and livable life.

So what's wrong with Bolin Creek? Why do we need to fix it? How will this plan remain fresh and helpful and not be something lost in the immensity of cyberspace or gather dust on a shelf? This plan is the Bolin Creek Watershed Restoration Team's attempt to shed light on these questions. At the same time, this plan can be viewed as as much an inquiry for the reader as questions to be answered herein. One core concept is suggested. If this plan is to be of value, it will be because it is seen not as a mandate from government or a pontification from experts, but as an invitation to collective collaboration. If there is a second foundational idea, it is that there really is not a compromise or partial solution. The watershed behaves as a whole; its integrity and health therefore relies on holistic, comprehensive, synergistic, and integrated strategies, programs, projects, and actions. Readers are invited to determine what patch of the restoration quilt that they can offer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan represents the first drafting of a comprehensive watershed restoration plan for Bolin Creek. The primary authors of this version of the plan have been staff from Chapel Hill's Stormwater Management program and Carrboro's Planning Department. The work, however, could not have been completed without previous and supportive efforts of many individuals and organizations too numerous to mention. Particularly noteworthy are previous State sponsored studies completed in 2003 and 2004 and summarized in this plan. This plan is seen as a next step in an ongoing process initiated through those reports.

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