

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. (5)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: February 8, 2005

TITLE: Morgan & Little Creeks Ecosystem Enhancement Program Local Watershed Planning Effort

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES __ NO _ X _
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Targeting of Management Report with Appendices A & B C. Memorandum of Agreement	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Noah Ranells, 918-7326

PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is to present the Morgan & Little Creeks Local Watershed Plan Targeting of Management Report to the Board of Aldermen.

SUMMARY

Project Scope & Background

A Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of Carrboro and the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP; formerly Wetlands Restoration Program) was signed by the Board of Aldermen on 12 May 2002. The EEP is a non-regulatory agency of the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Division of Water Quality. The EEP combines an existing wetlands-restoration initiative by the DENR with ongoing efforts by the NC Department of Transportation to offset unavoidable environmental impacts from transportation-infrastructure improvements. The US Army Corps of Engineers is also a sponsor of the NC EEP. The NC EEP Memorandum of Agreement indicated in Section 2 item 3 that EEP agreed to "Implement one or more projects within the Town of Carrboro area based on feasibility studies, the NCWRP's need for projects, as well as compatibility with town planning priorities."

The EEP had identified the New Hope Creek Drainage area, including Morgan and Little Creeks, as a target sub-basin for assessing, restoring, and protecting the wetlands, creeks, streams, and unnamed tributaries. Portions of Booker, Little, Morgan, and New Hope Creeks are listed on the NC DENR 2004 Impaired Waters List which cites fecal coliform, chlorophyll a, and impaired biological integrity. Potential sources cited included urban runoff, storm sewers, and a major municipal point source. These water bodies are experiencing negative impacts from compromised stormwater management function due to increased development including loss of buffers, channelized streams, flooding, and degraded water quality.

Project Implementation

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The EEP and its consultant, TetraTech, worked with local watershed partners for over 2 years and produced a final document entitled “Targeting of Management” in Fall 2004 (*Attachment B*). There was no cost to the Town for proceeding with this project other than very limited staff commitment to providing already existing information, reviewing information and proposals, and serving as a liaison on behalf of the Town.

Projects identified in this project have the potential to provide long term improvements in aquatic habitat and water quality within the Town watersheds, as well as enhancing water quality protection in Jordan Lake. Additionally, it is anticipated that the Town will derive enhancements to the ongoing NPDES Stormwater Phase II Permit as well as the forthcoming Jordan Lake Pollution Management Strategy.

In Carrboro, results of the assessment project indicated high priority for a series of best management practices (BMPs) and stream restoration associated with Tom’s Creek from the Main Street and NC HWY 54 intersection going east to Poplar Street (*Attachment B*: Main Report, Site 9; Appendix A, Sites 14 through 18). In addition, BMPs were prioritized for the area south of Main Street in the Roberson Place neighborhood (*Attachment B*: Main Report, Site 8; Appendix A, Site 11). BMPs were also prioritized for Carrboro Elementary and Wilson Park.

Staff has already met with Perry Sugg (EEP) and Nancy Guthrie (Clean Water Management Trust Fund; CWMTF) in December, and with Deborah Amaral (EEP) in early January to discuss pursuit of the high priority projects. Nancy Guthrie of the CWMTF indicated a minigrant opportunity may be justified to consider how the Rogers-Triem property may complement the results of the EEP assessment. In early February, Deborah Amaral and Perry Sugg visited BMP and restoration sites and presented the “Targeting of Management” report to town staff as part of the Development Review process. EEP representatives indicated that they are interested in pursuing BMP and restoration activities in Carrboro and seek input from the Town on which sites may be prioritized for subsequent landowner contact, design, and construction.

Preservation of parcels that can enhance stormwater management and reduce pollutant export to Jordan Lake was also evaluated. Section 4 of the main report (*Attachment B*) includes parcel level prioritization presented graphically on pages 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7. Possible review of relevant sections of the Town of Carrboro Land Use Ordinance to further protect stormwater and water quality are noted on pages 3-10, 3-11, and 3-12 of the main report (*Attachment B*). Staff will be reviewing these components of the report as part of ongoing activities related to Bolin Creek and review of the land use ordinance.

In summary, this report represents a thorough assessment process that can be used by the Town of Carrboro in a variety of ways. A letter of appreciation from the Board of Aldermen to NC EEP and a request for timely implementation of at least one project may demonstrate the commitment of the Board of Aldermen to improving stormwater in the Town of Carrboro. Town staff will continue to work with EEP staff and develop a list of recommended BMP and restoration sites for future review and approval by the Board of Aldermen.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to accepting the report.

For BMP and restoration projects on private lands, the EEP bears the cost of conservation easements, design, and construction, as well as 5 years of monitoring. On town owned land, the EEP traditionally requests donation of the conservation easement, but the EEP funds the design and construction project phases, as well as 5 years of monitoring. Customarily, the EEP requests that municipalities accept the operation and maintenance responsibilities for sites owned by the Town of Carrboro and this would have fiscal impact to the Town of Carrboro. It is relevant to note that inspection, operation, and maintenance of stormwater BMPs will also be mandated by the Town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II Stormwater Permit.

For preservation projects, EEP seeks to partner with a variety of agencies and non-profits including the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the NC Natural Heritage Trust Fund, the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Triangle Land Conservancy. Depending on the granting agency, some local match for grant funds is required.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board accept the NC EEP "Targeting of Management Report", direct staff to prepare a letter to NC EEP acknowledging receipt of and expressing appreciation for the Targeting of Management report as well as direct staff to facilitate a priority list for implementation of BMPs and restoration projects for Board of Aldermen review and approval.