

Having Growth and Water Quality

Haywood Waterways has been working to promote low impact development projects that help protect and improve water quality. In our past newsletters, you have read about low-impact development principles (Summer 2007), and how we helped coordinate the Growth Readiness Roundtable (Spring 2007, Winter 2008, www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/agecon/WECO/haywood/). We are also helping our partners implement several Resource Assessment for Mountainside Development projects. These assessments identify the best home sites on a property based on existing natural resources and terrain. The local Resources Assessment team participated in the Mountain Landscapes Initiative (www.mountainlandscapesnc.org). One Haywood County developer was used as a case study in the Landscapes Initiative. To some, these are controversial topics because of fear that they intrude on basic private property rights. The assessments are only done with willing landowners on a voluntary basis.

Haywood Waterways stresses everywhere we go that we are not a regulatory agency, nor do we promote regulatory action. We believe we can always find a win-win opportunity – a win for the landowner and a win for the community through better water. We can accomplish this mission through the partnerships we've formed and finding free or very low-cost technical and financial assistance for landowners.

We do promote tools that protect water quality, and that's what the low-impact development and Resource Assessment projects are about. These are tools that can be voluntarily used by developers; tools that have been shown to save developers money; tools that help landowners protect their land; tools that are available without involving regulatory agencies; tools that respect landowners' rights; tools that help developers build more stable roads and better home sites; and tools that protect human health. We promote the wise use of our natural resources. We believe we can have growth and protect our natural resources. Finally, we promote the wisdom of one of America's greatest conservationists -Aldo Leopold:

“When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land;
When both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation.
When one or the other grows poorer, we do not.”

McGill Associates Helps Towns Protect Water Quality

Over the past several months, representatives from McGill Associates have helped Canton, Clyde and Waynesville be compliant with Phase II of the Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program. Phase II of the NPDES Stormwater Program requires operators of regulated small municipal separate storm sewer systems, or "MS4s", to obtain a NPDES permit and develop a stormwater management program. The stormwater management program is designed to prevent harmful pollutants from entering the storm sewers and ultimately our streams.

The goals of the Phase II program are to reduce the discharge of pollutants, protect water quality, and satisfy requirements of the Clean Water Act. This program is designed to locate and identify non-point source discharges entering a municipality's local streams and water bodies. The term non-point is used to distinguish this type of pollution from point source pollution, which comes from specific sources such as sewage treatment plants or industrial facilities. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that non-point pollution is the single largest cause of the deterioration of our nation's water quality.



Outfall pipes such as this one can carry pollutants, if they are inappropriately and illegally dumped, directly to our streams.

McGill Associates was contracted by each town to walk all streams within the town and extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) limits. While walking the streams, outfall pipes were mapped using global positioning system (GPS) technology and stored in a digital database; potential illicit discharges found flowing from an outfall were also noted. Simply put, an illicit discharge is the introduction of pollutants into a pipe that drains to surface water. The vast majority of outfalls were tied to stormwater conveyance systems, which are designed to move stormwater off and away from roadways and parking lots, however, some illicit discharges were found.

Common illicit discharges include raw sewage pipes, industrial solvents, paints and oils dumped down storm drains, and gray water (washing machine effluent). All illicit discharges are then reported to the municipality who then works to repair the problem. Outfall inventories not only help bring local municipalities into compliance with federal and state regulations, but also benefit the community by identifying and stopping the flow of pollutants that deteriorate local water quality and are potentially harmful to human health.

Haywood Community College Helps Improve Richland Creek

Thanks to a wonderful idea of Lucy Lowe, a professor at Haywood Community College, Haywood Waterways recently partnered with the College and the Town of Waynesville to improve the quality of Richland Creek. In her class, Lucy requires 10 hours of community service from her students. Several of them volunteered to help remove garbage and mark storm drains with "Do Not Dump – Drains to Stream".

The students removed approximately one-half ton of garbage, including 22 bags of trash, two tires, various metal, and other items too large to put in a bag, from four sections of Richland Creek – Little Champion, Frog Level, Robinson Street, and the Waynesville Recreation Park. Along with the stream-clean up, the students also marked 33 storm drains around the town with permanent plastic markers. The goal of the markers is to educate and prevent people from dumping pollutants, such as used oil, paint, grass clippings, and litter, into the storm drains, which then end up traveling through the storm drain system and dumping into our streams. Remember, storm drains don't go to the water treatment plant, whatever enters a storm drain exits into a stream.



Cost-Share Assistance Available for Farmers and Landowners

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service is now accepting applications for Haywood County landowners to install practices that improve water quality on agricultural operations. This program is being offered through the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Bill programs. Interested farmers or landowners should stop by the USDA office located at 589 Raccoon Road, Suite 203, Waynesville, NC 28786 by September 15, 2008, 4pm to submit an application. Cost share practices include watering tanks, water wells, fencing, streambank stabilization, pastureland improvement, sediment control on agriculture lands, agri-chemical buildings and many more. Cost share assistance for contracts will pay a percentage for actual costs of installation of projects. For more information, contact Kara M. Cassels, District Conservationist at 452-2741 x 3 or email at kara.cassels@nc.usda.gov.

Special Gifts to Recognize Special People

Many people are seeking more meaningful ways to honor or remember friends and relatives. A "tribute" gift to Haywood Waterways can serve this purpose and support our ongoing efforts to protect our lakes, creeks and streams.

Gifts given in honor or memory of a special someone can be sent to "Haywood Waterways Association," PO Box 389, Waynesville, NC 28786. For gifts "in honor of," please let us know who is being honored and where to reach them to notify them of the gift. For gifts "in memory of," please let us know who is being remembered and the name and address of a surviving relative or loved one to notify. (In either case, we will not disclose the exact amount of your gift.) For more information on tribute gifts, please contact Ron Moser at (828) 452-9077.

