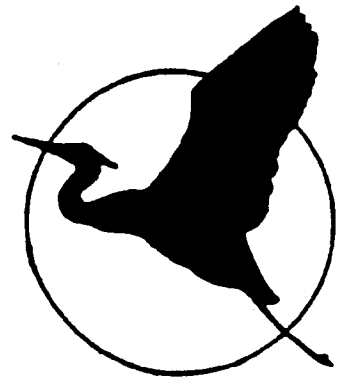


Haw River Assembly

***P.O. Box 187 Bynum, NC 27228
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May 31, 2002

(76)



Dear Members of the Chapel Hill Town Council:

The Haw River Assembly supports the proposal to include buffers on intermittent streams in the Chapel Hill Development Ordinance. We believe this to be a crucial part of the plan to protect the environment. Numerous studies have shown that the smaller, intermittent streams that feed larger creeks can be a significant source of run-off pollution during storms. A natural buffer along the edges of these smaller streams will significantly reduce the stormwater surges from impervious areas and the sediment eroding from construction projects.

In our own experience of monitoring and watching streams for 20 years, we have often been dismayed to find that a bad sediment incident in the larger creeks, or the Haw River, actually stemmed from stormwater run-off from an intermittent stream. A relatively small disturbance of land along a normally "dry" creek can result in a large amount of mud entering the stream during a storm. Likewise, water rushing off pavement adjacent to a small stream scours the streambed, and erodes the banks.

Protecting the natural forest and vegetated areas on each side of streams has a number of beneficial effects. First of all, the buffers slow down runoff during storms and prevent sediment, nitrogen, pesticides and other pollutants from reaching the stream. By slowing the runoff, the buffers protect the stream from the scouring effect of bursts of storm water roaring through. The trees along the banks provide shade to keep streams cool, which is important to aquatic life. In addition, the stream buffers are an important habitat for many species of wildlife and provide a connected green corridor.

Protecting the intermittent streams through buffers could not come at a more important time, when the town and university are both growing. Larger buffers will protect streams, clean water and the environment we cherish.

The Haw River Assembly is a non-profit citizen's organization founded in 1982 to protect the Haw River and Jordan Lake, which includes the tributary streams running through Chapel Hill. Our Chapel Hill membership has been a strong voice for environmental protections. We appreciate very much the work that is being undertaken by the Chapel Hill Town Council and planning department to strengthen the protection of streams and the environment.

Sincerely,

Elaine Chiosso
Executive Director

Richard Goldberg
Board of Directors

Defending the Haw River and Jordan Lake watershed since 1982