

Albemarle RC&D



*Wisely Conserving Natural Resources
& Creating Opportunities for
Positive Economic & Community Development*



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Paddle Camping Platforms Dedicated on the Perquimans River



Perquimans County officials, project partners and paddle enthusiasts gathered on May 3rd in Hertford to dedicate seven new paddle camping platforms on the Perquimans River and Mill Creek. Perquimans County constructed the camping platforms with a \$100,000 grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation. The Perquimans County Nature Tourism Development Project also is placing access signs and mile markers along the river and its tributaries, conducting user surveys, and marketing the river trail in the region. To provide information on land and water based nature tourism opportunities, the project set up a Paths of Perquimans web site: www.pathsofperquimans.org.

The nature tourism project is a partnership between Perquimans County, Town of Hertford, Town of Winfall, Town of Belvidere, the Perquimans County Trailblazers, Albemarle Hospital, and the Albemarle RC&D Council.

The nature tourism project in Perquimans County is a partner in the Paths of Northeast North Carolina, an alliance of local groups dedicated to promoting the region's rich natural assets for nature tourism and economic development. In 2005, Chowan County constructed five paddle camping platforms on Holladay's Island in the Chowan River. With a grant from the NC Recreational Trails Program and technical assistance from the Albemarle RC&D, the county recently completed five new paddle camping platforms on John's Island next to Edenton (www.pathsofchowan.org). The platforms are located at the intersection of three existing paddle trails: Pembroke Creek Trail, Queen Anne Creek Trail and the Trestle House Inn Trail.

With a grant from the NC Recreational Trails Program, Pasquotank County recently completed four paddle camping platforms on the upper Pasquotank River. The county is also improving access sites for canoes and kayaks. This project is a partnership between Pasquotank County, the Paths of Pasquotank, Albemarle Hospital, and the Albemarle RC&D.

The Albemarle Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) is a 501(C)(3) private non-profit organization that serves the people of Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell & Washington Counties.

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Second Grade Class Visits John's Island Camping Platforms

Mrs. Lee Powell's second grade class from White Oak Elementary School visited the paddle camping platforms on John's Island across from Edenton's waterfront park.

The 16 children, parents and local officials enjoyed a picnic lunch and environmental program on the platforms. The children also enjoyed a boat ride on Pembroke Creek and Queen Ann Creek where they saw a variety of plants and wildlife.

Robbie Laughton, Council Member and Director of Chowan County Parks and Recreation Department helped organize the field trip. The Chowan County Sheriff's Office provided a safety boat.



Great Dismal Swamp State Park Nature Trail



The Albemarle RC&D Council and the Dismal Swamp State Park received a \$50,000 grant from the North Carolina Recreational Trails Program to construct 2,000 feet of boardwalk to serve as a nature trail in the park. This is the first time that an area within the interior of the 14,344-acre park is being made accessible to the public; all pre-existing trails are around the periphery, mainly former logging trails. The boardwalk/nature trail will be adjacent to the multi-purpose Visitor Center with auditorium, exhibit hall and classroom, and within easy walking distance of the Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center/Rest Area. It is estimated that over 100,000 visitors will visit the park annually, of which at least 50% are expected to use the trail.

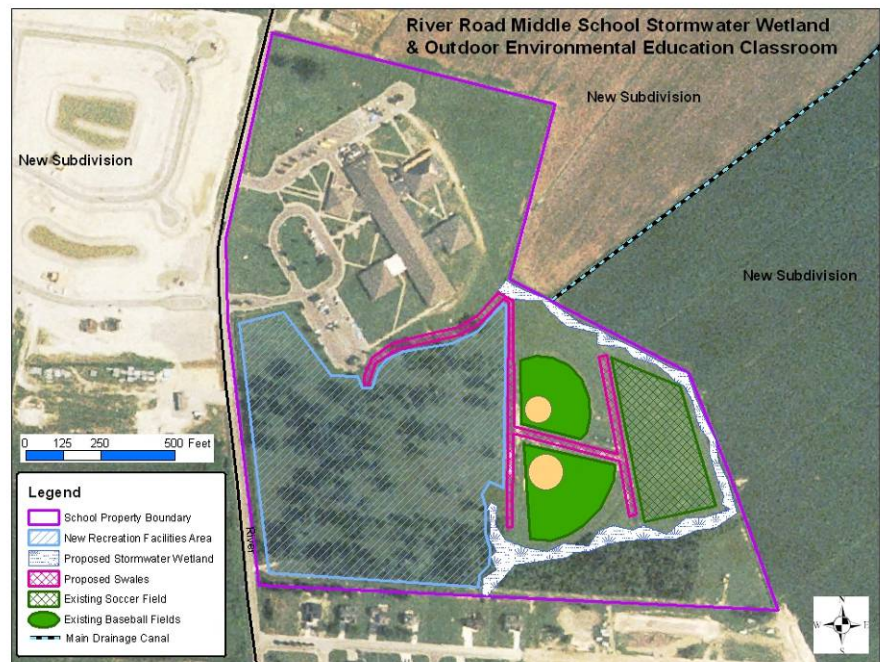
The proposed boardwalk/nature trail will connect with 16.7 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails within the park. It is adjacent to the Dismal Swamp Canal, which connects with the Pasquotank River and the Albemarle Sound. Locally, it connects to biking trails leading to Merchant's Millpond State Park and to a recently developed system of 5.5 miles of multi-use trail by the Camden County Parks and Recreation leading to South Mills, NC, and with plans to connect to the City of Chesapeake's 20 mile multi-use trail.

Park personnel are already providing environmental education programs to a yearly average of 8,000 public school students. When complete, the boardwalk will serve as an extension of an existing trail which leads up to but does not enter the Dismal Swamp wetlands. It will make it possible for visitors, both adults and children, to experience first hand the swamp forest, and view first-hand a wide variety of wildlife native to an interior wetland.

Council members J.C. Rountree and Ann Coughlin, former RC&D Coordinator Rodney Johnson, and many local citizens provided key support for the grant application.

River Road Middle School Constructed Wetland & Outdoor Classroom

Close to a major U.S. Coast Guard Base and Elizabeth City State University, the River Road Middle School is located in one of the fastest growing areas of Elizabeth City. Farm land on all sides of the school is being converted to residential housing. Non-point stormwater runoff from the school and new residential areas is a major concern for water quality because the area drains directly to the Pasquotank River. The stormwater runoff from this area carries N and P fertilizers from recreational fields and lawns. Stormwater is also known to be a major carrier of fecal coliform bacteria, which contaminates the river and negatively affects shellfish harvesting.



The Albemarle RC&D Council is partnering with the River Road Middle School, the Pasquotank County Parks and Recreation Department, the Pasquotank Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to construct a stormwater wetland at the River Road Middle School in Elizabeth City. The wetland will filter stormwater from about 15 acres of baseball fields and about 20 acres of new soccer fields. The existing drainage for the recreational fields will be reconfigured so that it flows into the wetland.

Science teachers at the Middle School also will use the wetland as an outdoor classroom for biology and environmental education. Measurable results will be assessed through water quality samples, pre & post education surveys and wetland establishment.

The River Road Middle School wetland project is being funded by the North Carolina Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant Program.

RC&D Calendar

Executive Board Meeting, July 10th, 9:30 am, USDA Service Center, Edenton.

Regular Council Meeting, August 12th, 7:00 pm, Chowan County Agricultural Center, Edenton.

Southeast Association of RC&D Councils, September 10th-13th, Wytheville, VA.

N.C. Association of RC&D Councils, September 24th-27th, Kitty Hawk, NC.

Executive Board Meeting, October 9th, 9:30 am, USDA Service Center, Edenton.

Awards Banquet, December 9th, 7:00 pm, Vernon James Center, Plymouth.

Legislative Update

Federal Funding

The President's FY 09 budget has \$0 for the RC&D program. The National Association of RC&D Councils (NARC&DC) is lobbying members of congress to restore full funding for the RC&D program. For more information on the RC&D program including updates on federal funding, visit the web site of NARC&DC: www.rcdnet.org

On-Going Projects

Camden County

- Treasure Point 4-H Camp
- Camden Community Park
- Dismal Swamp State Park Boardwalk and Nature Trail, Camden County
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Chowan County

- Chowan County Nature Tourism Brochure
- Red Bank Farm Recreation Park
- Cape Colony Neighborhood Access
- Chowan County Water Quality & Water Management Study
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Currituck County

- Whalehead Club Shoreline Protection and Water Quality Improvement
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Dare County

- Roanoke Island Festival Park Canoe/Kayak Access and Maritime Forest Trail

Hyde County

- Ocracoke Resource Development Project
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Pasquotank County

- Frog Island Public Boat Access
- River Road Middle School Constructed Wetlands
- Regional Baseball Heritage Project
- Upper Little River Watershed Protection
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Perquimans County

- Commerce Park Shoreline Restoration and Constructed Wetlands
- Perquimans County Nature Tourism Development Project
- Perquimans County Community Center Phase II
- Perquimans County Community Center Fishing Pier and Canoe/Kayak Access
- Water Quality Improvement and Water Management Study
- Perquimans River Riparian Forest Conservation Project
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Tyrrell County

- Alligator and Goatneck Community Drainage Improvements
- Alligator & Goatneck Community House Lifting and Septic Tank Repair
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

Washington County

- Plymouth Riverfront Restoration Project
- Hurricane Isabel Stream Cleanup Phase III Supplemental Funding

All programs and services of the Albemarle RC&D Council are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, disability or political beliefs.