



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
From: Festival for the Eno
Eno River Association
4404 Guess Rd
Durham NC, 27712

Press Contact:
Greg Bell – Festival Director
greg@enoriver.org
919-357-5038

Jessica Sheffield – Executive Director
jessica@enoriver.org
919-451-1578

Festival for the Eno Cancelled for 2020 *Beloved community event a tradition since 1980*

Durham, NC - The Eno River Association (ERA) announced today that it is suspending efforts to plan its annual Festival for the Eno due to continued concerns about the health and safety of attendees and participants amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“We held off on this decision as long as we could,” says Greg Bell, Festival Director, “but the uncertainty and risks to our community members’ health are simply too high to allow us to continue with planning an event of this complexity and magnitude for this July.”

The Festival for the Eno has been held each year since 1980 at Durham’s West Point on the Eno City Park to celebrate the nature, culture and history of the Eno River and to raise funds for land protection in the Eno basin. It features five stages of music; hundreds of arts, crafts, and environmental exhibits; and draws tens of thousands of attendees each year to the banks of the Eno River.

Described by the New York Times as “...homey and raucous, full of music, dancing, crafts and sweaty kids slurping giant glasses of lemonade,” the Festival is known as a showcase for established and emerging musical acts from throughout the Southeast. Previous performers include: EmmyLou Harris, Doc Watson, Carolina Chocolate Drops, Mandolin Orange, and Rainbow Kitten Surprise.

This is the first cancellation for the Eno Festival, which has endured floods, storms, heat, and drought over its 40-year history.

“We are deeply saddened to have to make this decision, and we know it will be felt by the tens of thousands who have shared many joyful moments with us on the banks of the Eno each summer,” says Jessica Sheffield, Executive Director, “We are grateful to





local officials, our partners, and our Festival volunteers and staff who worked together to make this difficult decision thoughtfully over the last few weeks. We have always worked to protect the health of the Eno River, but our foremost priority must be to protect the health of the people along its banks”.

The Eno River Association has been instrumental in the creation of five regional parks and the protection of over 7,400 acres, many of which have seen record visitation through the COVID-19 shutdown.

“The overwhelming popularity of our parks and open spaces throughout this period strongly demonstrates the need for more public lands and the importance of events like the Festival for the Eno. We know our community will continue to enjoy these open spaces, and support us as we continue to protect the land and waters of the Eno”, Sheffield added.

Bell says there are no plans to reschedule the 2020 Festival, but that elements of the Festival for the Eno will be incorporated into other events presented by the Eno River Association this fall and beyond. “We will be looking at ways to support our musicians and crafts artists and continue our educational mission through events, both live and online, and are already working on planning for the 2021 Festival for the Eno.”

To offset the loss in projected revenue, the Eno River Association is soliciting donations and offering Festival merchandise, including the familiar “Eno River” T-shirts through their website: www.EnoRiver.org.

###

About the Eno River Association:

The Eno River Association is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization founded in 1966 with a mission to protect the natural, cultural and historic resources of the Eno River basin in northern Durham and Orange counties. The Association has protected over 7,400 acres of natural and working lands and has helped create five local, state, and regional nature parks, including Eno River State Park, Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area, West Point on the Eno City Park, Penny’s Bend Nature Preserve, and Little River Regional Park. The Association continues to acquire land and secure easements, as well as provide stewardship, education programs, and the annual Festival on the Eno to inspire others to prioritize our local, natural resources.

More information is available at www.enoriver.org

