

NEWS
from
the

Eno River **association**

4419 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27712

Spring, 2007



Photograph courtesy of Duncan Heron.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of the Eno:

It's hard to believe it's time for another newsletter already. Just in this quarter we've produced our 2001 calendar, celebrated the new millennium in the Eno way, hired a new executive director and of course carried on the day-to-day tasks of the Association.

David Page volunteered once again to edit the 2001 Eno River Calendar, just as he has for the past five years. And just as he has in the past, he produced a beautiful and award-winning tribute to the Eno River. We're very fortunate to have someone of David's talents be willing to put forth the effort it takes to make the calendar happen. It's amazing to realize we've been producing a calendar for 30 years. As we do each year, we'll be delivering them to many elected officials at the state and local levels so that they'll have a daily reminder of the importance of protecting great open spaces. You should still be able to get your calendar in local stores and you can also order one from our office in Durham (620-9099).

New Year's Day had absolutely gorgeous blue skies, sunshine, and temperatures that were brisk but not overly cold. About 400 friends of the Eno took advantage of the weather to join together for the annual Eno River Association hike at the State Park. We split into two groups, one going about two miles (perfect for the small kids) and one going four miles. And of course at the end of both hikes there was hot chocolate, Russian tea, popcorn, and marshmallows for roasting over the open fire. Many thanks go to Hazel Cash and her crew for preparing our good eats. Thanks are also due to Marcia Eickmeier who not only organizes both hikes on New Year's Day but also organizes the winter and along with Margaret Wainright, the spring hikes along the Eno as well. And of course we couldn't do it without the help and support of the State Park rangers and their staff. We'll have hikes every Sunday afternoon throughout the spring, so don't miss the opportunity to do some wildflower spotting.

The most exciting news right now is that the Board has just hired our first full-time executive director. Lori Olson is a committed conser-

vationist, with a wealth of training that goes directly to the challenges we're facing. She has a BS in Biology as well as an MS in Public Affairs and a Masters in Community and Regional Planning. She has a great can-do attitude and is anxious to get to work. I hope you'll get a chance to meet her soon.

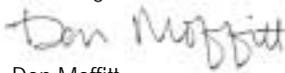
Please make plans to join us for the Association's annual picnic on May 6. Go ahead and put it on your calendar--we're planning to hold it at Ayr Mount this year, a beautiful riverside historic site in Hillsborough. We're working on plans now and I'm hoping we'll have a hike or two, a tour of the home, and maybe even a game for all of us kids.

Wayne Cash has taken over the leadership of our Land and Stewardship Committee. He's more than busy with lots of projects that are "in the works". On top of that he's been working on renovations to our office (which we fondly call the "White House") and storage facilities at the same site. And I mean literally working on it: he's swinging a hammer. We're grateful for his skill and hard work.

We're proud of all that we've accomplished; as usual we still have a long wish list of projects we'd like to fund. For example, Dave Cook and Wayne Poole (both of the Schoolhouse of Wonder) would like to gather oral histories of folks who have lived along the Eno for the past several decades. We need to upgrade computers at our office. We're planning to publish an Eno Journal in the fall -- and the list goes on. Your continued support will allow us to accomplish all of this and more. More and more people are realizing the tax benefits of contributing appreciated stock and real property; if you'd like assistance with that (or estate planning or anything else at all) just call the office and let our folks know what we can do for you.

Please consider spending some time on Association activities. Even an hour can be a big help. Whatever you do this spring, I hope you get a chance to spend some time exploring one of the great parks along the Eno and the Little.

Warm regards,



Don Moffitt

Executive Director's Report

Greetings, Members:

I am incredibly excited to be the new Executive Director of such a fabulous organization. As a land trust and environmental conservation organization, the Eno River Association (ERA) performs a vital function in our community: protecting and preserving the natural, historical and cultural resources of the Eno River Valley. Having the opportunity to work every day to preserve and enhance one of the most beautiful rivers in the State of North Carolina is simply amazing.

The ERA office is quickly becoming my "home away from home". I am busily getting acquainted with the many ongoing activities of the organization and becoming involved with our various committees dealing with issues in transportation, finance, organizational development and more. I have also been getting to know Judy, Greg and Randy, the other staff members of the Association, and the inner workings of our office.

I am quickly discovering the incredible history of this organization from Board members and others who have been a part of this organiza-

tion for many years. There is much to learn about the important work that the ERA has done in this community for almost 36 years. It will be a fascinating journey, and I look forward to continuing the good work of the ERA.

We have several activities coming up, including our Spring Wildflower Hikes, the Spring Picnic at Ayr Mount in Hillsborough, and of course the 2001 Festival for the Eno. Warm weather is just around the corner, and I am looking forward to meeting many of you at these upcoming events. I hope you will take the opportunity to join us in celebrating the beauty and magic that is the Eno River.

I look forward to a prosperous and productive future for the Eno River Association, one that will only be possible with the gracious support of our members. You are our greatest resource. If you would like to get in touch with me, or have any questions regarding the Association or our upcoming events, please do not hesitate to contact the office, Enofest@gte.net or (919) 620-9099.

Sincerely,

Lori Olson

ENO CALENDAR: SPRING 2001

Spring Wildflower Hikes -- Every Sunday at 2 p.m. from March 11 through May 6. Join us when, as e. e. Cummings said, "the world is puddle-wonderful," and wildflowers line the banks of the Eno. These hikes of about 2 hours are limited to 20 people, so register early with Margaret Wainwright at (919) 489-2795 or by email at: Margaretwainright@hotmail.com

Great Human Race -- Saturday, March 24. For details, see elsewhere in this newsletter.

Annual Spring Picnic -- Sunday, May 6. Come on out and have a good time at our annual picnic! We're planning to hold it in Hillsborough at Ayr Mount, a beautiful home on spreading grounds along the river which is a National Register Historic Site. We're hoping to arrange a home tour, hikes and games. Watch your mailbox in April. We'll send you a reminder with more information. See you on the Eno!

Earth Day in Durham -- Saturday, April 28. Details not available yet, so call 560-4381 or the ERA office, 620-9099, for more information.

Lori Olson Named New Executive Director

We're pleased to announce that we have hired a full-time Executive Director. Please join us in welcoming Lori Olson to our staff. Lori comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience in land trust issues and public planning. She's a graduate of the University of Texas (Austin) and the University of Oregon, with a BS in Biology and masters degrees in Public Affairs and Community and Regional Planning. She's an energetic, committed conservationist and she's ready to support our environmental mission as well as the administrative tasks it takes to keep us moving.

"Nature in the City" Durham Environmental Education Programs

Durham organizes a number of educational outings, mainly in such places as West Point on the Eno Park. Most are free. Some trips (for a small fee) are made to nearby state parks, such as Hanging Rock. For more information call Chris Shepard (620-8154) or see www.ci.durham.nc.us/recreation/parksandrec and go to the environmental education page.

The Great Human Race!

Opportunity beckons! Once again, the Durham Volunteer Center, an important community-based volunteer center, is sponsoring the Great Human Race. We gladly show our support to the organization that provides us with much-needed volunteers during the Festival for the Eno.

The Walk/Race begins at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 24, at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park. Warmups start at 9 a.m.

There are three ways in which you, your friends and associates, can help:

- Get your friends/associates to sponsor you. Call Helen Drivas for donation envelopes and further instructions.
- Helen Drivas and Judy Allen are seeking sponsors for the walk. You can call either person to make a pledge.
- Make a contribution. All checks should be made out to the Volunteer Center, Great Human Race. 75 percent of the funds received benefit the ERA; 25 percent supports the Volunteer Center.

Great Human Race contacts: Helen Drivas, 113 Pinecrest Road, Durham, NC 27705; phone: (919) 489-1150. Judy Allen, Eno River Association, 4419 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27712; phone: (919) 620-9099.

Legislative Update: 1/30/01

Given the new Administration, please keep informed about likely attempts to:

- Open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.
- Overturn some of Clinton's National Monument designations.
- Overturn the "Wild Forests" (US Forest Service roadless areas) executive edict by Clinton, which would protect much of remaining roadless areas from exploitation.
- And doubtless, many other anti-environmental initiatives.

See ERA web site for links to national conservation organizations to help follow these issues, or email tdoneal@mindspring.com. The Federal legislature phone line is: 202-224-3121.

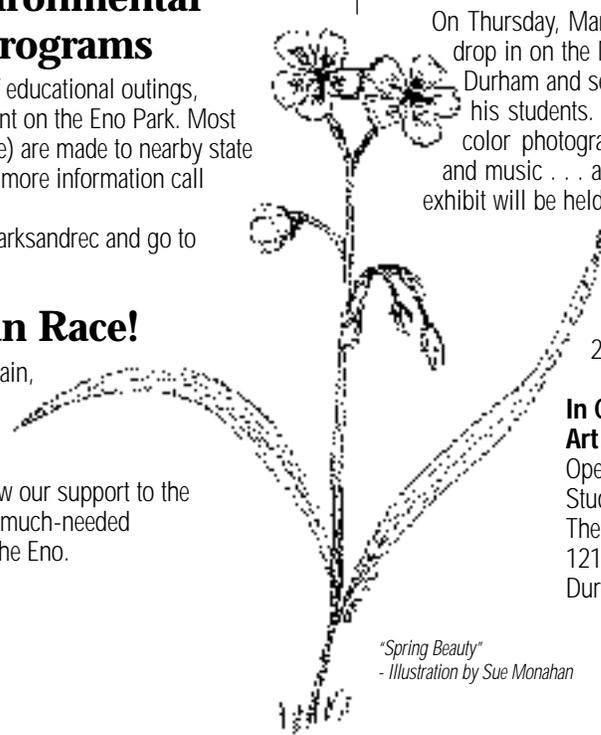
— Denny O'Neal

In Celebration of New Hope Creek

On Thursday, March 22, from 4:00 PM until 9:00 PM you can drop in on the North Carolina School of Science and Math in Durham and see an art exhibit by art instructor Joe Liles and his students. The exhibit will include black-and-white and color photography, silk screen prints, drawings, paintings, and music . . . all inspired by beautiful New Hope Creek. The exhibit will be held in the Student Center which is on the ground floor of the new Education Technology Complex. The exhibit will remain hanging until April 12 and will be open to the public on weekdays from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Call 286-3366 for more information.

In Celebration of New Hope Creek Art Exhibit

Opening March 22, 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Student Center
The NC School of Science and Mathematics
1219 Broad Street
Durham, NC 286-3366



"Spring Beauty"
- Illustration by Sue Monahan

Conservation Easements: Keeping the Family Farm in the Family

(This article is reprinted through the courtesy of the National Committee for the New River. It was written by Tom Smith, NCFNR president.)

Conservation easements have become valuable tools for keeping family farms and other land holdings in private family ownership for future generations.

Why?

In recent years, demand for rural land for development purposes has caused the value of family owned farms to skyrocket. Land that may have been worth a few dollars per acre a generation ago is now probably worth several thousand dollars per acre. The value may be especially high if the property is located near scenic or natural areas such as rivers, mountain peaks, or parks.

Why might such an increase in value be a problem for the landowner?

Along with an increase in value come increases in taxes. Rising property taxes are becoming a larger problem for landowners each year. Much more importantly, however, is the fact that many family farms are now so valuable that when the current owner passes away, inheritance taxes may make it impossible for future generations to inherit the property. Unless the family has significant other monetary assets with which to pay these unreasonably high inheritance taxes, the family farm often has to be sold to pay them.

In 2000, any inherited value over \$675,000 was taxed by the federal government at a rate of at least 37 percent. Depending on the value of the estate, the rate could be as high as 55 percent. For example, you inherit the family farm, which is worth \$1,000,000. (A 300-acre farm with a house, outbuildings, equipment and/or other assets could be worth this much or more.) The value subject to inheritance tax is \$325,000. At a rate of at least 37 percent, the inheritance tax on this farm is at least \$119,000, which is due nine months after the death of the previous owner. In addition, there are probably state inheritance taxes due. In this situation, many farms have to be sold to pay estate taxes. In too many cases, the land owners did not know that they had a tax problem until it was too late.

What is a conservation easement, and how does it help to reduce this tax burden?

As a landowner, you have many rights that pertain to how you may use your property. Some rights are more valuable than others, and one of the most valuable is the right to erect structures, and/or alter the landscape, changing it from its natural condition. This is generally referred to as development.

A conservation easement is a voluntary, customized, legally binding agreement between the landowner and a qualified land trust organization, which restricts a landowner's right to develop the property. Since this right has a high value, the conservation easement can drastically reduce the value of the property. Since estate taxes and property taxes are based on assessments of the value of the land, a reduction of the value reduces the tax burden. In the above example, a conservation easement on the farm, or a portion of it, might have reduced the value of the property to \$650,000, and no inheritance taxes would have been due.

How do I know how much a conservation easement on my property would be worth?

A qualified appraiser can assess the current value of your property in the traditional way, before an easement is conveyed. Based upon the

specific conditions of the easement, the acreage involved, and other factors, the appraiser can then arrive at a value for the property after the easement is in force. The difference in the two values is the value assigned to the easement. This should be done by an appraiser who is experienced in appraising conservation easements.

If development rights are donated (rather than sold), the donation may be considered as a charitable gift for an income tax deduction. To qualify, the easement must provide significant public benefit by permanently protecting a significant natural resource. Land along the New River or the Blue Ridge Parkway has been automatically qualified by previous legislation. Otherwise, a qualified land trust organization should be able to assist you in determining whether your land qualifies. Other state income tax benefits may apply as well.

Do I have to allow public access to lands under easement?

This depends on the purpose of the easement and the wishes of the landowner. For example, if the easement is for a hiking trail to pass through a farm, the public would need access to the hiking trail, but might not require access to the entire farm. Conversely, many easements along the New River are for the purpose of preserving the scenic qualities of the surrounding land. In this case, the public may view the land from a canoe, but may not be allowed to trespass on the land under easement. This allows the farmer to continue farming operations without interference.

What rights will I have to give up?

Typically, a conservation easement will prohibit, or severely restrict, radical alteration of the natural landscape, such as surface mining and erection of nonagricultural structures. Many easements also limit, to some extent, subdivision of the property. These restrictions are required to accomplish the necessary conservation purposes and to qualify for tax reductions. Depending on the purpose of the easement and the wishes of the landowner, other restrictions may apply.

In most cases, the landowner has a great deal of control over the restrictions contained in a conservation easement. The landowner usually retains the right to operate the farm and use the land for agricultural and recreational purposes.

As a landowner, how do I know whether a conservation easement would help my family keep the farm?

As you can see, estates that include sizable land holdings are often more valuable than the owner realizes, and the value of land is probably increasing faster than most other types of investment. If your family owns a significant amount of acreage, you should consult with a qualified and experienced estate planner (usually an attorney or CPA) for advice. This professional can assist you in organizing your estate so that your heirs, not the government, retain as much as possible of the family property upon your death.

A conservation easement is not just a land conservation tool. You should think of it as one of several valuable estate management tools that may help you accomplish this goal.

Some Additional Suggestions To The Land Owner

1. Due to rising property taxes, some landowners find it increasingly difficult to afford to own land that does not produce income. Before granting an easement, plan for how your land will continue to provide substantial income for future generations of your family, and be sure the easement clearly preserves your family's continued right to engage in these activities. In general, it may be advisable

to retain as many private agricultural, forestry production and recreational rights as possible. You may also want to specifically retain the right to rent or lease the property to others for agricultural or recreational purposes.

2. Remember that a conservation easement is an estate planning tool as well as a conservation tool. If you are considering a conservation easement on your land, you should be working with a qualified estate-planning professional to ensure that the easement best serves the interests of your estate and your heirs.
3. Remember that once the document is signed, the land is bound in perpetuity by its restrictions. Take the necessary time in negotiation to be sure that you retain rights that are of value to you. You should do this in conjunction with an attorney not connected with the land trust which will hold the easement.

Little River Campaign Reaches Initial Goal --And Now Seeks More

The Eno River Association and Triangle Land Conservancy have exceeded the \$180,000 initial goal in their fundraising campaign to protect the Little River in northern Orange and Durham counties -- more than six months ahead of schedule.

The campaign was boosted in the last few weeks of 2000 by a major gift of \$50,000 from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Other large gifts include \$20,000 from the F. M. Kirby Foundation, Inc., a philanthropic foundation based in Morristown, New Jersey.

Raising \$180,000 fulfills the two organizations' commitment in their unprecedented partnership with Durham and Orange counties to purchase land for the Little River Regional Park. The total cost of the park is just over \$1 million.

The counties were successful in their efforts to get grants from the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (\$377,000) and the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (\$250,000) to cover part of their obligations.

On November 7 the counties completed the purchase of 305 acres for the park for \$764,000. They will purchase the remaining 86 acres by July 2001.

The 391-acre park, the first regional park in the Triangle, will provide low-impact recreation alternatives such as hiking and wildlife-watching for thousands of area residents. It will also protect more than a mile-and-a-half of Little River shoreline in an area facing intense development pressure. This in turn will help protect water quality in the river, which is a drinking water supply for Durham and Raleigh.

Having surpassed the \$180,000 level to purchase land for the park, the Eno River Association and Triangle Land Conservancy will continue to raise money for future conservation opportunities -- land acquisition or conservation easements -- to further protect the water quality of the Little River. These contributions will be held in a Little River Opportunity Fund to be jointly administered by the two organizations.

"There's a lot of work to be done in this area," said Don Moffitt, President of the Eno River Association. "The Little River Regional Park is really just the beginning. We're encouraged by the tremendous success of our campaign so far, and believe that folks around here see the need for additional protection of our threatened natural resources and our beautiful natural areas, and will keep supporting this campaign until it's over in June."

Both the Eno River Association and Triangle Land Conservancy will appeal to their members to participate in the campaign. During early

March, information about the campaign will be mailed to members who have not previously contributed.

Leaders of both the Eno River Association and Triangle Land Conservancy attribute the success of the campaign to the positive reaction by the counties and by donors to the partnership that supported the effort. This collaborative effort also impressed agencies responsible for grants to the counties as well as foundations that provided grants to ERA and TLC.

Communal Living Along The Eno

All who are friends of the Eno River are also very familiar with that ubiquitous wader, the great blue heron. We usually encounter it as a solitary fisherman, and as a result, we tend to think of it as a loner, bachelor-type bird. But did you ever wonder where the roosting and nesting sites might be for these Eno River waders? Fishing is a solitary occupation for the most part as it requires quiet, patient and undisturbed stalking. But that belly full of fish is often returned to a nest full of hungry mouths, strategically located in the midst of a most remarkable living arrangement.

In the fall newsletter I described a winter walk that I took along the entire length of the Eno. After finding the river's source in an apple orchard in upper Orange County, my next most exciting find was that of a heron rookery in eastern Durham County! While walking down river from Penny's Bend on the south bank of the river, I came upon a flooded forest clearing adjacent to the river. This was an area of about 10 acres of shallow water with scattered standing dead trees. This swamp habitat reminded me of many similar ones I had seen in our area that are usually created by the damming of streams by beavers.

It was a late winter day and I paused to enjoy the call of the tiny chorus of frogs all around me, completely invisible to the eye but very present to my ear. At the sound of a tapping woodpecker, I slowly raised my head and let my eyes follow the course of the rotting tree trunks upwards. Suddenly I realized that I was standing before an amazing sight! In front of me, about 50 feet off the water, was a circle of a dozen large nests near the tops of a ring of dead trees. These were huge nests, each one several feet across, made of a patchwork of many large branches. As I was walking around the muddy edge of the pond to get a better view of this extraordinary site from a different angle, a great blue heron flew in from the river and landed atop one of the nests. The mystery of the nests was solved!

In all my wafflings and wanderings along the Eno in Orange and Durham counties I had never come upon a heron rookery. This great circle of a dozen nests strategically placed high over the water had such a communal and almost ritual feel to it. Those seemingly solitary fishers had quite an elaborate community life after all! Embarrassingly, I felt like I had just barged into a private bedroom completely unannounced. I could only see a couple of birds on the nests that late afternoon in February, but I returned to the site later in the spring and found the rookery teeming with the activity of many parent birds and their young. I have since checked local wildlife records and this appears to be the first recorded heron rookery in Durham County in recent times.

Before the demise of the beaver in the Eastern United States that began with European settlement in the sixteenth century, evidence of their damming activities was everywhere. Today there are estimates that possibly up to 20 percent of eastern North Carolina was flooded with beaver ponds before the assault on the animal by Europeans. We were at one time an immense wetland! In those days, then, it is possible that the great blue heron also ruled these waterways. Rookeries might have been a common sight in our region. Could they be returning again with

the resurgence of beaver populations in our area in the past several decades?

For our Eno River, the heron surely is a charismatic megafauna. Standing four feet high with a wingspan of up to seven feet, it never ceases to elicit an "ooh" or an "aah" from my wafers when we come upon one of these big fliers suddenly taking off above the river and passing over our heads. When frozen in its still pose, it has a startling and prehistoric appearance. When stalking its prey, it has cautious and highly intelligent looking eyes. Upon stumbling into their nesting site, you have the feeling of discovering the primitive encampment of a lost tribe along the Orinoco.

This winter I stood on the edge of Jordan Lake watching a large gathering of several hundred gulls and cormorants in a feeding frenzy together. They were diving into the water, splashing about on the surface and intensely squawking at each other. As I was peering into this mass of avian energy, I was suddenly aware that I was not the only observer of this aquatic spectacle. Just up shore from me was a great blue heron standing alert, erect and composed on a log at the lake's edge. The heron was also taking in the swirling energy of the gulls and cormorants, but with great serenity. I strained to pick up the heron's thoughts. At first I wondered if it was watching for fish that the gulls and herons might be chasing in his direction. But it seemed to me that this intelligent bird was probably aghast at the gull and cormorant frenzy and was just amusing himself over their obnoxious and seemingly inefficient behavior.

The heron's familiar call is a deep-throated "gronnk" as it takes off after staining the rocks and logs white with its copious amounts of digested fish droppings. But the great blue heron is not going off to slink alone in some secluded forest glen. There is a community of family and friends to literally "hang out" with, high up in that auspicious circle of nests at the top of the trees on the lower Eno. There is food to regurgitate and share with hungry mouths and then leisure time to catch up on the evening news - like sharing stories about silly wafers, sipping from their Capri Sun juice boxes, appearing as slumbering creatures just emerging from their urban hibernations for the momentary challenge of briefly experiencing life in the wild. I guess the more appropriate question could be, "Who really constitutes the lost tribe?"

-- Dave Owen, Resident Field Naturalist
at West Point on the Eno Park in Durham

Kids' Korner

Amphibians On Parade

If you have gone for a walk recently, you may have noticed some strange new sounds coming from the roadside ditches and woodland ponds that have filled with February rains. What is that clicking? As you get nearer to investigate, all is quiet again. If you have the patience to sit still near the water for awhile, you will again hear "Creeeeek, creeeeek, creeeeek" and maybe even "Peeeeep, peeeep, peeeep."

Our amphibians that have been sleeping the winter away, safe from freezing weather under the mud of ponds and roots of trees, are awakening for The Spring 2001 Amphibian Parade! As the warm sun and rains loosen the soil, they dig themselves out and head for water to mate and lay eggs.

On wet rainy nights in mid-February, SPOTTED SALAMANDERS begin the parade and crawl silently down to temporary woodland pools. Over a period of several days, masses of them gather to do their underwater mating "dance," and then return to their forest burrows, leaving their globs of eggs behind. Salamanders do not call, so it is easy to miss this wondrous nighttime event.

The 19 or so species of frogs and toads that live in the Piedmont, however, call loud and clear for their mates. They wake up from their long winter's nap at different times and each kind seems to "take turns" in the breeding pools. Each has its own special call, and just as you can learn to tell birds apart by their songs, you also can identify which amphibians are in the pools, even if they are hiding.

Here are some easy ones to learn:

That "Creeek, creeek, creeek," like the sound of running your thumb-nail over the teeth of a comb, is the call of the UPLAND CHORUS FROG.



This first frog you hear in spring is tiny -- only to 1 inches long -- with a light line along the upper lip and, usually, three rows of stripes or spots down its back. These forest floor dwellers are seldom seen after breeding season.

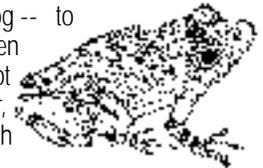
SPRING PEEPER calls are loud "Peeeeeep, Peeeeeep, Peeeeeep." At close range the calls can hurt your ears! These brownish frogs are also small -- to 1 inches long -- with an "X" marking on their backs. If you go peeper hunting at night with an adult, you can locate them by shining a flashlight on their inflated vocal sacks, which look like tiny chewing gum bubbles. They are good climbers, so you may find one on your window some rainy night.



In later spring, on warm nights in March through May, you can hear the hoarse snoring call of PICKEREL FROGS. Often calling from underwater, they vary in size from 1 to 3 inches and have two regular rows of squarish spots down their backs. These frogs are armed with a poisonous skin secretion to protect them from their enemies. Other kinds of frogs kept in the same container could be injured.



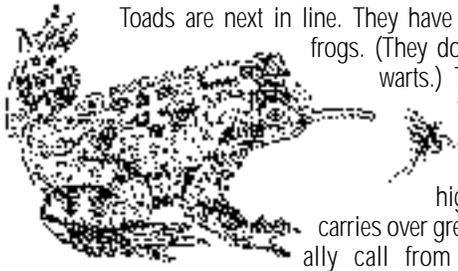
When you hear a fast "click, click, click" like the sound of pebbles being tapped together, look for the NORTHERN CRICKET FROG. This small and warty tree frog -- to 1 inches -- has a dark triangle between its eyes with varied body colors. It's not a good climber but an excellent jumper, quickly jumping away in zig-zags which make it hard to catch.



In May and June you will hear the loud "c'tung" call of GREEN FROGS floating in the pond. They sound like banjo strings plunking.



These good-sized frogs -- 2 to 3 inches -- are usually more brown than green. Many times they are confused with Bullfrogs, but green frogs have two ridges that run down the sides of their backs that bullfrogs lack. If you scare a green frog sitting on the edge of the pond, it will jump into the water with a loud cry.



Toads are next in line. They have drier wartier skin than frogs. (They do not, however, give us warts.) The females are larger than the males. THE AMERICAN TOAD has a melodious high-pitched long trill that carries over great distances. They usually call from late March to May.

FOWLER'S TOADS start calling a little after the American Toads. Their calls are not musical at all but instead a loud "w-a-a-a-h." sound. Each of their spots contains three or more small warts. Toads lay their eggs in long strings.

BULLFROGS are our largest frogs -- 3 to 8 inches in length.

Some of them can weigh over a pound! They like to live in large ponds, lakes and streams where you can hear their deep "jug-o'-rum" call throughout the summer months. Males are smaller than females and have yellow throats and larger eardrums (the circles behind the eyes).



The short flutelike trill -- "Whrrrrr, Whrrrrr, Whrrrrr" -- of the GRAY TREEFROG from the tops of trees is a sound of summer. Their usual color is a light gray but they can change color to hide themselves and become dark gray to brown to green. No wonder they are so hard to find! After breeding in shallow pools from May to August, they return to the trees. Their sticky toe pads help them to be great climbers.



Note: A good recording to help you learn the frog calls is: Elliott, Lang: The Calls of Frogs and Toads - A NorthWord Nature Guide. A good identification book is: Amphibians and Reptiles of the Carolinas and Virginia, by Bernard S. Martof et al.

-- Illustrations and text by Sue Monahan

Natural, Cultural and Historical Gems At Cameron Park School

Cameron Park Elementary School in downtown Hillsborough has a remarkable treasure trove of natural, historical and cultural gems right on its property. The school was built in the 1960s on top of the Old Halifax Road and next to the Great Trading Path (St. Mary's Road), which was used for thousands of years by Native Americans, and then by traveling Europeans and African Americans within the last 300 years.

The school also sits on the old Ruffin and Cameron estates of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Camerons, most notably, were avid arborists and gardeners who planted hundreds of exotic trees such as Douglas and Chinese Fir, Royal Oak and Hemlocks, many of which still thrive on school grounds. In the 1840s the Camerons also built an octagonal, brick ice pit, currently under reconstruction and restoration by The Preservation Fund of Hillsborough. In those days the ice was

likely taken from the Eno River during cold winters or perhaps shipped by train from the North Carolina mountains or New England in milder seasons and stored in the ice pit under layers of sawdust. Finally, the school also has right next to it -- on Board of Education property -- the relocated Hughes Academy, a mid-1800s one-room schoolhouse and college preparatory institution.

A beautiful natural feature for Cameron Park School is a small tributary of the Eno River running on the south side of the property through a mature, hardwood forest. About 12 years ago a hardworking group of parents, teachers, townfolk and neighbors decided to take advantage of this beautiful outdoor teaching classroom and create a Cameron Park Nature Trail around the creek. The trail winds down around hemlocks, tulip poplars, red oaks, sycamores and beech trees, across nicely constructed wood bridges and up to a beautiful amphitheater. The topography, stream life, plants and trees make for an exceptional short hike with the possibility of a perfect classroom setting under an old European Beech tree.

Hillsborough, like so many other towns, has experienced an unusual amount of storm damage in the past few years with floods, hurricanes, wind shears and tornadoes. Unfortunately, the Nature Trail at Cameron Park lost many large trees and the use of its trail for many months. Another team of interested parents, teachers, the Hillsborough Tree Board, County employees and environmental educators, including two Eno River Association Environmental Education Subcommittee members, has recently risen to the challenge of removing debris from the trail, holding fundraisers, adding updated signs and creating thematic nature kits for teachers and students.

Cameron Park is also making space for a new science lab to house outdoor curriculum activities around such subjects as stream life, animal homes, tree identification and birds of the Piedmont. The lab will also ultimately be home to natural, cultural and historical information about the grounds at Cameron Park to help students and the community appreciate the wealth of resources surrounding the school.

Future plans of the Eno River Environmental Education Subcommittee at Cameron Park School include sponsoring an Eno River Watch monitoring station at nearby Occaneechi Indian Village on the Eno (another cultural and historical treasure!) to encourage teachers to walk their classes down the street and INTO the river.

- Holly Reid

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OUR MISSION:

To conserve and protect the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Eno River Basin.

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