

Winter 2019

Eno River Currents





My daughter, Josie, at the Eno

Greetings friends,

I am elated to be writing to you as the new Executive Director of the Eno River Association!

I moved to Durham from Western Pennsylvania late in the spring of 2000, and early that summer I met the Eno River. My dog, Kansas, and I walked the trails, waded the river, and kayaked between the West Point Mill and Sennett's Hole. Kansas is gone, but the Eno remains a constant for my family. Now I walk the trails, wade the river, and kayak with my daughter, Josie. Durham is our home, and Eno has our heart.



As I told the Eno's Board of Directors during our introductory conversations, this opportunity to lead Eno is a personal and professional coup. Recalling my childhood days of tree climbing, creek walking, rock collecting, and animal watching; my teenage years of river rafting, spelunking, rock climbing, and leading the environmental club; then working as a cultural and natural history educator, ropes course facilitator, and Executive Director at Durham's Schoolhouse of Wonder, and so on, I see that the path has led me to this role at Eno. There's nothing more important to me than preserving natural spaces for the plants, critters, and people who need them.

Mine is a story that must sound very familiar to fellow supporters of the Eno River Association. I imagine we share a history of exploring a river or creek near our childhood home, of walks in the woods during a change in season, and of friends, family, and pets with whom we walked those trails. I look forward to hearing your stories of the Eno, and working alongside you to ensure that this inspiring space remains protected, healthy, and magical for my daughter, for you and your loved ones, and for those to come.

Warmly,

Jessica Sheffield

Jessica Sheffield

Our mission is to conserve and protect the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Eno River basin.

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Cover photo by Paul Travis of the Matheson Tract, which will become part of Eno River State Park



Photo of the Matheson Tract by Fred Myers

Meeting our Mission – Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resource Protection

The mission of the Eno River Association is to conserve and protect the natural, cultural and historic resources of the Eno River basin. In 2019, our land protection efforts hit on every aspect of our mission. With the generosity of landowners and support from members like you, The Eno River Association in partnership with Orange County will conserve over 170 acres of working lands conservation easements along tributaries of the Eno River and Little River, protecting the natural resources through riparian buffers, the cultural resources through farmland preservation, and historical resources through historically significant farm conservation.

Earlier this year, we closed a conservation easement on 77-acres of forestland adjacent to the North Fork Little River just over five miles upstream of the Little River Reservoir. This easement protects the

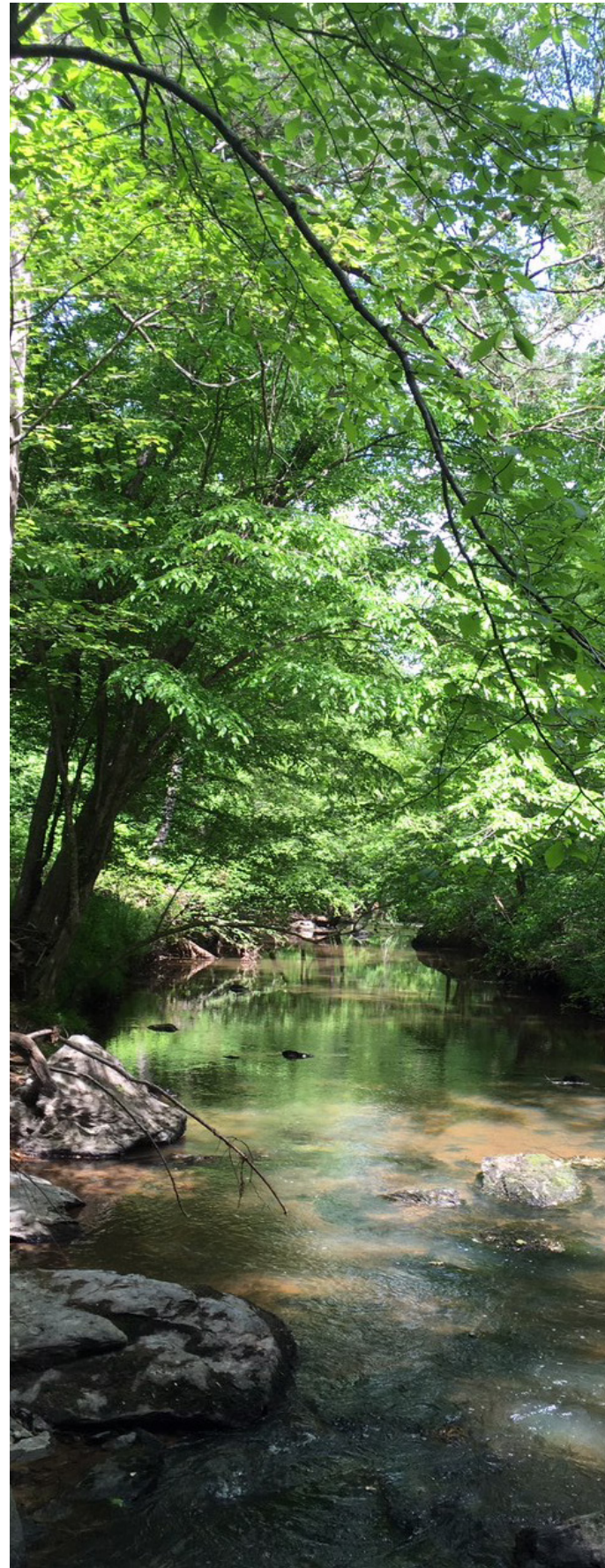
river by ensuring intact riparian buffers yet allows the landowner to manage the forestland. The Little River is not only source waters to one of Durham's drinking supply reservoirs, but also has aquatic habitat of state significance.

By the end of the year, we will close two additional working lands conservation easements totaling 95 acres in the Upper Eno. The Upper Eno is a conservation focus area for the Association because it is not only the headwaters of the Eno River, but also the Neuse River. Protecting source waters helps provide clean, dependable drinking water to downstream users such as Hillsborough, Durham, and Raleigh by filtering nutrients and sediments, moderating water temperatures, and reducing flood risks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

What is a conservation easement?

Conservation easements are written agreements that protect land for its natural or cultural resource values while leaving it in private ownership. As with all Association conservation easement properties, we commit to visiting the land annually to ensure that the terms of the easement are being met and the lands and resources continue to be protected.



MEETING OUR MISSION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

One of these farms is adjacent to our Lick Creek Conservation Easement which will provide additional protection to a major headwater stream to the East Fork Eno River and Lake Orange, a drinking water reservoir for the Town of Hillsborough. The other farm is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and contains a well preserved, rare Reconstruction-period I-house (circa 1873) and a large intact grouping of agricultural outbuildings constructed at various times from 1900 through 1950. This project will ensure a historically significant farm property will remain as a tangible and meaningful link to the small farm culture dating from the 1800s. Protecting this property will also help preserve the scenic viewshed and rural character of the historic St. Mary's Road corridor.

In addition to the generous contributions by the landowners, funding from Orange County's Lands Legacy Program, the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, the City of Raleigh's watershed protection program, and the City of Durham's watershed protection program (Little River project only) made these projects a reality.



New Year's Day Hike Marks 50 Years

December 30th, 1970 – a small announcement appeared in the Durham Morning Herald: "A New Year's Hike along the Eno River will be held Saturday by members of the Association for the Preservation of the Eno River Valley and others who are interested...". The hike began at the home of Margaret and Holger Nygard on Cole Mill Rd. Margaret recommended "...hikers come warmly dressed and well shod and bring an apple or a piece of chocolate for energy."

The 2020 New Year's Day Hike on the Eno will be our 50th! It will begin at 2:00 p.m. at the Fews Ford picnic area of Eno River State Park with a choice of 2.6-mile hike or a 5-mile hike led by a crew of Eno guides, just like the first one in 1971. Afterward there will be popcorn, hot chocolate, and roasted marshmallows in the picnic shelter. What we did at the beginning of January 1971 has now become a national movement in state parks called "First Day Hikes". 1971 also launched the Eno River Winter Hike series which continues for our 50th season every Sunday in January through early March.



This year has been a time of giving for the Eno River Association. Our history is built on ensuring public access to high quality natural areas. By the end of the year, we will donate a 14-acre tract of land to NC State Parks to be incorporated into Occonee Mountain State Natural Area. The Association will also transfer a small, but very important trail easement to NC State Parks located along the Eno River at Pleasant Green Road. These tracts, along with Occonee Mountain and Eno River State Park, are on the proposed route of the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST). The donation of these properties to the State will help move things forward for the MST, eventually creating a hiking trail from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks, traversing through Durham and Orange counties.

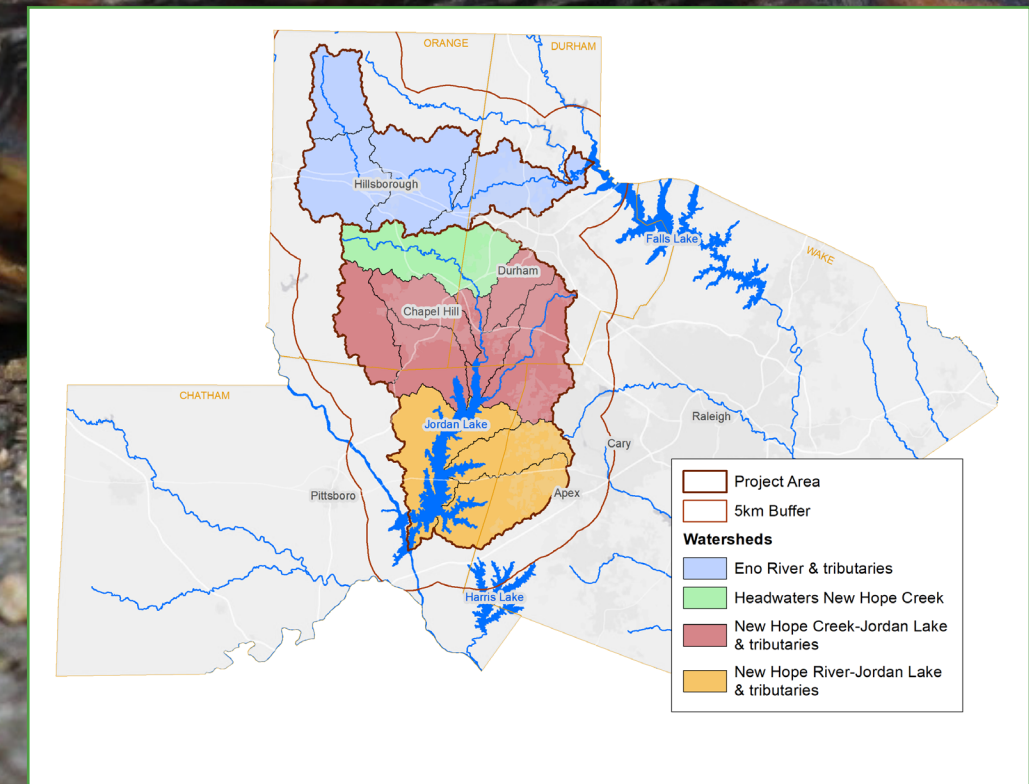
The MST is not the only corridor planned for Durham and Orange counties. In 2014, the Eno River Association was among an innovative collaborative of environmental organizations, ecologists, universities, county and municipal governments, and state agencies. The protected and managed lands across our landscape provide anchors for wildlife habitat and ecosystem services. The project partners realize the existing protected areas are in danger of becoming further isolated by roadways and other causes of habitat fragmentation. In the face of increasing threats and environmental changes, these natural areas require protected landscape corridors to maintain ecosystem functions and processes.

Almost four years since the first meeting, the Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Group is set to unveil the results of this ambitious project, which focuses on the Eno River and New Hope Creek watersheds, funded by Partners for Green Growth and Orange County, led by ecologist Julie Tuttle, Ph.D. and administered by Johnny Randall, Ph.D., NC Botanical Gardens. The results of this project will be discussed at the 2019 Orange County Environmental Summit. This work offers critical insight on the places that are essential for connectivity for our most sensitive wildlife species, leading to more successful wildlife populations and great ecological integrity into the future that is essential for protecting water quality, our local economy – including working farms and forests – and public health.

Eastern Box Turtle Photo by Bo Howes

Protecting Landscape Corridors

Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) by Bo Howes



Educating Our Community



EEEEK (Eno Environmental Education for Kids) at the Festival for the Eno.



Eno Education Station at Jambor-Eno.



Eno River Field Station for 39 middle and high school students for five days at our Confluence Natural Area.



Girl Scout litter pick-up at West Point on the Eno.



iWalk the Eno Science and Nature Day Camp with 117 campers over two one-week programs at Eno River State Park.



Stream-In at Fews Ford.



Buzzing with Burt's Bees Volunteers

On September 20, 220 volunteers from Burt's Bees assisted the Eno River Association as part of their Culture Day corporate philanthropic effort. Volunteers helped with projects at four different locations. At the Fews Ford access of Eno River State Park, 40 volunteers helped remove numerous sweet gum trees from a former open field. Nearly 80 volunteers removed invasive plants from Penny's Bend Nature Preserve and City of Durham's West Point on the Eno Park. At our Confluence Natural

Area in northern Orange County, almost 100 volunteers helped with several tasks including enhancing our 2017 restoration project. All of these volunteers got to participate in BioBlitz efforts to identify local animal and plant species as part of the E.O. Wilson Institute's Half Earth Project. We are so grateful for the help of our partner organizations like Burt's Bees! We couldn't complete these and so many other projects without their fabulous corporate support.

Land & Stewardship Update

We have two new faces in our land and stewardship team. Kim Livingston is our new (old) Director of Conservation and Stewardship. Kim was the director starting in 2014 and left in 2017 to be the Land Conservation Manager at Orange County. Kim has over 10 years of land conservation experience and we are excited to have her back. She can be reached at kim@enoriver.org.

Tom Davis, our Stewardship Associate, is our newest team member. Tom was formerly the Water Resource Coordinator for Orange County. He is a long-time resident of Durham and comes to us with years of experience in various environmental realms. Tom will lead stewardship workdays, so be on the lookout for volunteer requests. Tom can be contacted at tom@enoriver.org.



Kim Livingston



Tom Davis

Thank you to our generous supporters

You make protecting land, water, and wildlife in Durham and Orange counties possible. As our list of contributors has grown, it has become an increasing challenge to recognize everyone in our print newsletter. Although every gift is important and appreciated, the following lists recognize our Wildflower Society members and special honorary and memorial gifts only. We make every attempt to ensure accuracy when acknowledging donors and appreciate you notifying us of any errors.

Wildflower Society \$500 and Over

Leadership gifts made since June 1, 2018.

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Contributions to support our educational programming for children and adults.
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Save the Date

Eno River Association New Year's Day Hike

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

Hikes begin at 2:00 p.m.

Eno River State Park, Few's Ford Access | Durham, NC

Please allow 15 minutes to walk from the parking area to the gathering point.

The Eno River New Year's Day Hike is as traditional to the Triangle's first day of the year as black-eyed peas and resolutions.

Every year since 1971, we have sponsored a fun-filled afternoon of guided hikes, refreshments, and merriment. We'll have a longer 5-mile hike as well as a shorter 2.6-mile route. Hot chocolate, marshmallows, and popcorn will be served around the fireplace at the end of the hike. There will be something for everyone, so come one, come all, and enjoy New Year's Day at the Eno!

For more information contact our office at 919.620.9099 x4 or email hikes@enoriver.org.



Upcoming Events

December 2019
Annual Meeting &
Holiday Celebration,
Member Sale

January 2020
New Year's Day Hike
Winter Hike Series Begins

March 2020
Spring Hike Series Begins

June 2020
iWalk the Eno Science
& Nature Camp

July 2020
Festival for the Eno
Eno River Field Station

For more information about upcoming events visit our website at www.enoriver.org.