

Winter 2020

Eno River Currents





Tubing on the Eno River

Greetings Friends,

Thank you for taking this time to sit with us, to enjoy the pieces in our Winter 2020 edition of *Eno Currents*. There is much to tell you in these few pages!

First and foremost, please allow me a moment to celebrate, appreciate, and applaud the Eno River Association Staff, Board of Directors, Committee Members, Volunteers, Members, and their families, for their perseverance, dedication, humor, and sincere thoughtfulness during these past months. We have been wrought with a viral pandemic, civil unrest at the local and national level, encroaching development, a difficult political climate, and the impacts of climate change. Throughout, we at the Eno River Association have recommitted ourselves to advocacy, listened to those who've long lived along the Eno, and looked inward to find our own voices, too.

I am so proud that we have spent this past year, with its myriad challenges, working together to ensure the safety and good health of all in the Eno watershed. While I did not anticipate that my inaugural year in the leadership role at the Eno River Association would have these particular obstacles, it's certainly been an opportunity to jump into the deep end of the river, as they say, and work creatively alongside all of you, albeit remotely!

Next, I offer my deepest thanks to our donors – those individuals, families, small businesses, corporations, and governments who have recognized the value in preserving and protecting the Eno watershed. You helped us persevere through the ups and downs of 2020.



In the coming year we will use these gifts to continue to protect all who call the Eno home. We will work on land acquisitions, conservation, and stewardship; a strategic plan for the organization; and hosting educational programs and special events while meeting the health and safety needs of our community. There is much to do and I look forward to doing it together, with you.

Warmly,

Jessica L. Sheffield, Executive Director

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

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Cover Photo: Eno River Association's Confluence Natural Area by Todd Nance

Advocating for the Environment – Locally and Nationally

The origin story of the Eno River Association is an impassioned group of citizens advocating for the preservation of the natural resources in their backyard. Over our 54-year history, we have expanded our reach and impact to conserve over 7,400 acres of natural, historical, and cultural treasures – preserving the health, recreation opportunities, and economies of our communities, parks, and farms.

Threats to these efforts continue within our watershed – and also at large – so this year, we've returned to our roots as an advocacy organization. Many of you have joined us in this journey, and we are honored to lift our collective voices to advocate for open spaces, responsible development, clean drinking water, and diminishing the impacts of climate change.

The Great American Outdoors Act

In August, the GAOA was signed into law, marking the conclusion of a 50-year effort to secure permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. While the estimated \$900 million in annual funds are not directly accessible to the Eno River Association, they will be used to protect our national parks, connect & complete our

national, regional, and local trail networks including the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, expand outdoor access & wildlife habitats, and safeguard our drinking water. North Carolina is expected to receive about \$9 million each year. This is a huge win for our nation, and it is a bright spot in an otherwise tumultuous 2020.

Local Development

We are working in Orange, Durham, and Wake counties to advocate for responsible development that protects open spaces and native species. Our combined voices helped preserve essential Land & Legacy Funding in Orange County, and we are aligned with Braggtown Community Association, Save Black Meadow Ridge, Umstead Coalition, and other community groups who advocate for appropriate checks on development that threaten waterways, wildlife corridors, parklands, and residents. We will continue to lift our voices in support of responsible zoning, good development, and appropriate industry within our watershed.

If you would like to join our advocacy efforts and serve on our Land Use & Advocacy Committee, please contact us at association@enoriver.org or 919-620-9099.

A Note from Eno River Association Board of Directors Secretary, Christy Gudaitis. *Christy joined us in June, following the retirement of Bercedis Peterson.*



I am delighted to have joined the Eno River Association Board and to serve as its Secretary. I am a Duke graduate (undergrad and Law) and a lawyer in the Duke

University Office of Counsel. My husband Jim and I have been members for 20 years. We enjoy hiking in Eno River State Park, kayaking on the Eno River, and serving as Trail Stewards. I have also participated in the River Watch program with my children when they were younger. It is an honor to now join the dedicated Board members and staff in protecting this priceless asset of our community.

Jim and I live adjacent to the Bobbit Hole trail. My favorite Eno activity is my morning walk or run in the park. Not only is it good exercise for me and my dogs, but it is also therapeutic to get outside every day to observe the woods and the river change with the seasons. I love the variety of plants and animals that I encounter. Seeing the resilience of the trees – despite snow, hurricanes, and floods

– is fascinating and inspiring.

I look forward to working to ensure that the Eno is available to inspire all members of our community.

Christy Gudaitis



Eno River-New Hope Creek Partnership to Catapult Wildlife Corridor Conservation

The Eno River and New Hope Creek-Jordan Lake watersheds, spanning portions of Durham, Orange, Chatham, and Wake counties, are home to ecologically significant forests, wetlands, and other habitats that support a rich diversity of plant and animal species, including rare species. In these two watersheds, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has identified over 65 Natural Heritage Natural Areas. These terrestrial or aquatic sites have special biodiversity significance due to unique ecological features. The movement of animal species within and between these Natural Areas and other priority natural communities are necessary for their survival. In the face of increasing habitat loss and fragmentation from development and other threats, including climate change, wildlife species require an intact, connected network of habitat and movement corridors that maintain ecosystem functions and processes. Connecting wildlife habitats not only benefits wildlife populations but also benefits water quality, native plants, our local economy, and public health.

Although important lands have been conserved within this landscape, little effort has been

made to ensure connectivity across these lands. In the face of the rapid development within the region, ecosystem function and climate resilience are threatened. Therefore, since 2014, the Eno River Association has been partnering with a network of land trusts, conservation groups, educational institutions, local governments, and ecologists via the Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Group. The group's goal is to conserve the natural habitats and the connections between these watersheds to protect biodiversity and natural resources for current and future generations.

This fall, the Eno River Association was awarded the highly competitive Catalyst Fund grant from The Network for Landscape Conservation to further coordinate the efforts of the Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Group. Of more than 100 applicants nationwide, 13 were awarded Catalyst Grants and the Association was the only North Carolina group to receive funding. The funding will ensure we solidify the governance structures and develop a strategic action plan to guide the implementation of the existing landscape conservation plan.

The landscape conservation plan recognizes the crucial need for coordination across jurisdictions to preserve a connected, healthy, and diverse natural landscape for the benefit of both wildlife and people. The Catalyst Fund monies will allow the group to strategically coordinate efforts to bring the landscape conservation plan to decision-makers with the ultimate goal of seeing it become a formal guidance document for towns and counties.

Funding from The Network for Landscape Conservation with matching funds and/or in-kind services from Duke University, North Carolina Botanical Garden, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Durham County, City of Raleigh, Triangle Land Conservancy, and Eno River Association will help accelerate progress toward protecting these landscape corridors. When land trusts and environmental groups partner together, the impact can be felt for many generations. We are proud to be partnering for the future of the Eno River and New Hope Creek.

Want to learn more, view maps, and see the landscape conservation plan? Visit <https://ncbg.unc.edu/research/eno-new-hope-plan/>.

Eno Education Endures

The need for high-quality environmental and natural resource conservation education didn't stop with the Covid-19 pandemic, so neither did our Education Department. Pivoting like a sparrow in flight, we shifted to small group outdoor programs implementing social distancing, mask use, and other safety guidelines and created videos and online content about our nature and history programs.

This fall we launched the new Eno River Education Catalog which lists the many programs we can provide to school classes, civic groups, youth groups, and community clubs. There is plenty for all ages, and for teachers and schools, since each program references the NC Education Standard Course of Study curriculum.

The Association's commitment to education has doubled with the addition of AmeriCorps Environmental Educator and Resilience Corps NC Member Antonia Brown. She is leading small group programs in English and Spanish and producing more educational videos.

In July, we hosted Eno River Field Station for 29 middle and high school students at the Confluence Natural Area. While experts agree that outdoor spaces are among the safest during a pandemic, we took additional safety precautions: dividing students into smaller learning groups, providing more equipment & individual supplies to reduce sharing, additional distancing & mask-wearing, and wellness checks. Field Station is five days and one night of field studies alongside scientists, researchers, and conservation professionals.

We are grateful to Education Program sponsors like Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Duke Energy, Merck, and other individuals and businesses who help bring these programs to our community.

Learn more about all of these programs on our website: www.enoriver.org/education and see our videos on our IHeartTheEno channel on YouTube.



AmeriCorps Environmental Educator and Resilience Corps NC Member, Antonia Brown, checking turtle traps during the October 3 Nature Fun Day



Examining a spider at the October 3rd Nature Fun Day



Using a viewing bucket to look for mussels at Eno River Field Station



Discovering frogs of the night at Eno River Field Station,
Photos by Fred Myers

Notes from Eno's Confluence Natural Area

This spring, in response to increased demand for open space and trails due to the ongoing pandemic, Eno River Association staff expanded the number of hours that the Confluence Natural Area is open and available to the public for hiking. As a result, the Confluence remains open to the public seven days a week from dawn until dusk.

Over the summer, the number of visitors utilizing the Two Forks and Shepherd's Mill trails at the Confluence rose dramatically. In response, Eno staff increased the level of attention that the property and both trails received. A short section of the Two Forks Trail was rerouted to avoid a perennially wet spot, and more frequent trimming of the encroaching vegetation on both sides of these trails was done. Persistent rainfall this summer seemed to supercharge the vegetation along the trails.

"I first visited the Confluence with my friend Beth in March 2020 when our usual Riverwalk started to get a little too crowded. Our first walk was magical, and we've been back multiple times per week ever since. As people in the service industry, we had huge concern about how we would all come through this pandemic. But going to the Confluence each day helped me focus, and know that everything was going to be ok. I adore being in the woods and walking the perimeter of the big meadow. It's a great respite from what the pandemic has thrown at us."

- David Sutton of Chapel Hill's D.B. Sutton & Co.

Routine grass cutting at the Confluence is managed by Association board member and super-Eno-volunteer David Singleton. In addition to being our Board Treasurer, David spends several hours every other week cutting acres of grass at the site. Thanks to prospective Eagle Scout, Zeke Cambey, the Confluence now has two pieces of the site's old farm equipment on display, just east of the pavilion. Additionally, visitors to the site may have noticed that the restoration field near the entrance road to the property is now well-maintained. In an effort to reduce water and nutrient competition between the trees that were planted in this field five years ago, and the ubiquitous grasses and weeds and other plants that seemingly flourish in this low lying field, increased mowing around the trees was performed. The trees that were planted in this field include buttonbush, various oaks, persimmon, and others. Sweetgum and sycamore trees that have voluntarily taken root in this field are also present.

As fall progresses and the blooms in our pollinator garden go dormant, we hope you will take advantage of the cooler days to visit the Confluence for a hike or to discover the old farm equipment or mill site that was once used in the operation of this historic farm. Keeping the Confluence open and accessible to our community remains a priority for the Association!

These updates are made possible by donations made to the Eno River Association and our Confluence Fund. Learn more online at www.enoriver.org/donate.



“Conservation at its core is a celebration of diversity: diversity of plants, diversity of animals, diversity of landscapes, and diversity of cultures and people.”

-- from a June letter to our community
from Association Board & Staff

Like many land trusts, the Eno River Association was founded by landowners who wanted to protect their property and their neighborhoods. The results of the Association's early efforts were the creation of Eno River State Park and West Point on the Eno Durham City Park – properties that are free, open to the public, and located near economically and culturally diverse urban areas.

We realize that providing open spaces is just one arm of the work we must do in our communities. The Eno River Association must also address the historic injustices that have plagued the Black and Indigenous peoples in our river basin, who lived and labored on these lands long before the Association was an entity.

As part of our mission to protect the culture and history of the region, we learn from the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, we cultivate a range of artists at the Festival for the Eno, we uplift stories of under-represented communities, and provide free or low-cost educational programs for all ages. We know we can and must do much more to ensure that the Eno River Association represents and includes all of the people of the Eno River basin.

As part of our 2021 strategic planning process we will set desired outcomes and measurable goals for supporting the inclusion and diversity of our leadership & staff, educational programs, outreach events, and our Festival for the Eno. This has been and continues to be important to all of us, and we look forward to communicating about our plans during 2021 and extending invitations for you to join us.



Mount Gilead Missionary Baptist Church Baptism at Eno River State Park, by Fred Myers

Announcing the 16th Eno River Journal

The Eno River Association has a long tradition of Eno River Journals which are in-depth looks at places, features, and history. We are proud to announce the publication of our 16th journal, *Ribbons of Color: The History of People of Color Living Along the Eno River*, in February 2021. In short stories and essays, Indigenous peoples who first occupied this valley, formerly enslaved Black people forced to work on Eno farms and plantations, and Latinx people who arrived more recently tell their history and explore what the Eno means to them. Visit our online store for pre-sale information at www.enofest.org/store.

Excerpt from *Ribbons of Color*:

MS. ELIZA DIDN'T TAKE NO MESS

Eliza Payne Wilson, born March 10, 1911. She readily obtained employment as a domestic worker with the Carr family. Mr. Carr owned a supermarket. Eliza asked the Carr family if it would be possible for her to work in their store. Before they could answer, she informed them of her opinion: “If I am good enough to help raise your children, if I am good enough to clean your house, and if I am good enough to cook for you, I should be good enough to work in the store,” she exclaimed. They agreed. Eliza was hired to work in the meat department.

Written by Doris Wilson, talking about her mother.

Read more about Ms. Eliza and her decades-long personal campaign for civil rights in *Ribbons of Color*.



**Available in time
for the holidays**
www.enofest.org/store

2021 Calendar: Reflections on the Eno

In 1971, before there was an Eno River State Park or West Point on the Eno Durham City Park, and when the river was under threat from a dam, the Eno River Association came up with the idea of creating an Eno River Calendar to promote saving the river and raising funds to protect land. The group printed 1,500 copies, which were promptly sold, and 1,500 more were ordered, starting a community tradition. The 2021 Reflections on the Eno calendar is our 50th calendar. It is full of stunning photography of reflections on the water and reflecting on the river. These images are coupled with inspiring essays and letters from Eno friends, past and present, reflecting on memories and the meaning of the river. Your purchase of a calendar continues to support land conservation and advocacy to protect the Eno. The 2021 calendar is available in many area stores and in our online Eno Store.



Eno Store is Online

If you haven't popped by our Online Store recently, you're missing some awesome gift options for you and the Eno-lovers in your life. Check out our full line of Eno River tee-shirts, posters, ballcaps, and more. Just in time for the holidays, we've added new bandana colors and a re-designed tote bag. We've also launched some new merchandise including winter weather gear and items for our furry Eno friends. Order by 12/17 to make sure your gifts arrive by the holidays.



Eno Memberships make great alternative gifts

Honor your friends, family, or co-workers while making an impact on open spaces & clean water. Know someone who has been enjoying our parks and trails during the 2021 year? Help them learn more about how the Association protects these experiences. Your recipient will receive member access, information, and benefits throughout 2021. Gift memberships start at \$15, and new this year are several gift packages that include additional Eno merchandise.



Thank you to our generous supporters

You make protecting land, water, and wildlife in Durham and Orange counties possible. Each and every gift we receive is vital to making our work possible. The following lists highlight our Wildflower Society members and special honorary and memorial gifts. We make every attempt to ensure accuracy when acknowledging donors and appreciate you notifying us of any errors at hillary@enoriver.org.

Wildflower Society \$500 and Over

Leadership gifts made since August 1, 2019.

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Cynthia Satterfield

2020 Wins for Charitable Giving

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, & Economic Security (CARES) Act passed in response to the COVID-19 crisis is best known for its PPP loans and other measures of cash relief. Getting less attention are the provisions that increase the tax-deductibility of donations you make to charities in 2020.

For individuals who don't itemize deductions:

If you're one of the 9 out of 10 people who no longer itemize your charitable giving you may now deduct donations up to \$300 on your 2020 federal tax return, even when you take the standard deduction (\$600 for married-filing-jointly taxpayers).

For individuals who itemize:

The limitation for cash contributions to public charities was raised to 100% of an individual's adjusted gross income (AGI) for 2020 (up from 60%).

For businesses:

The AGI limit for cash contributions was also increased for corporate donors to 25% of taxable income (up from 10%).

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 Topsail Technologies
 Triangle Community Foundation
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 Vaguely Reminiscent
 Zarazua Painting
 Zola Craft Gallery

Special Gifts

The following lists recognize donors who made contributions to special funds between March 25 and October 15, 2020.

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 Dr. Woodhall "Sandy" Stopford
 From Thomas Augspurger
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Alexa McKerrow & Milo Pyne
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 The Eno River Association &
 Festival Staff
 From Nancy S. Gustaveson
 Tori Reynolds
 From Robin Smith

Named & Endowed Funds

The following funds have been named to honor those who have generously contributed to the Eno River Association.

Allen Lloyd Fund for the Upper Eno
 The Confluence Fund
 Conservation Land Stewardship
 Endowment Fund
 Festival for the Eno
 Margaret C. Nygard Land Acquisition
 Fund
 Roberta & Herman Brown Land
 Preservation Fund

Retirement Plan Giving:

The CARES Act did not change the rules around the Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD), which allows individuals over 70½ years old to donate up to \$100,000 in IRA assets directly to charity annually, without taking the distribution into taxable income. However, the Act did suspend required minimum distributions from retirement accounts for 2020, a major motivation for QCD gifts.

Long story short, now is a great time to make that last-minute gift to the Eno River Association.

Your envelope must be postmarked by 12/31/20 to count in this tax year, or, you can give online at www.enoriver.org/donate. Thank you for protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Eno River, especially in this tumultuous year!

The tax information provided is general and educational in nature, are subject to change, and should not be construed as legal or tax advice. The Eno River Association does not provide legal or tax advice. Always consult an attorney or tax professional regarding your specific legal or tax situation. Sources: 501c3.org and Fidelity Charitable.org.



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Farewell to Dave Cook

"Seems like I have said goodbye to the Eno River Association way too often. First, when I departed Eno River State Park to be the Hanging Rock State Park Superintendent, then again when I retired from NC State Parks as the North District Superintendent, and now, as your Eno River Association Education Coordinator. For family needs, I will be leaving my post at the end of the year. It is not easy. We all want to do work we love and that is meaningful. This job allowed me to work taking care of the place I love: the Eno River, doing work I love: environmental education, with the people I love: the Eno River Association. This has been the perfect work situation for an old park ranger like me. Now, it's not really goodbye as I expect to continue as a frequent Eno volunteer, but I will miss seeing everyone as often."

After retiring from the State Park system, Dave Cook pursued environmental work locally, first with Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association and then the Eno River Association. He brought years of experience, unmatched knowledge, and a loving & generous spirit. His talent and heart will be missed by us all. If you're among those who were impacted by Dave's many years of service to the Eno, please send him a farewell message at association@enoriver.org

