

Ecological Assessment Listening Group Meeting with Biohabitats, Inc., Nov. 6, 2006

Attendee Comments Received at the Ecological Assessment Listening Group Meeting

Does the group know of any studies that have been done on the site?

- Morgan and Little Creek Plan by the State of NC
- Chapel Hill Bird Club bird counts
- Chapel Hill High School bird counts
- Smith Middle School water monitoring (data may not be usable)
- Streamwatch on Bolin Creek
- Fish studies done by UNC students downstream of site
- Creeping Cedar study
- County assessment of forests across the entire county includes site
- Landscape for Wildlife in Orange County
- Salamander study by graduate student
- Local governments and Haw River Assembly water quality data: Wendy Smith, of Town of Chapel Hill, may have some of the data
- Carrboro macro-invertebrate data
- Information on Friends of Bolin Creek website-pictures of flora and also pictures of Crow Branch
- There is some history of the site on the Friends of Bolin Creek website also. There is an old mill site on the property, originally owned by Buck Taylor, a notable early Chapel Hill citizen.
Comment that this site has been abused/disturbed by the public.

Are there any notable areas or features of the site the group would like to point out?

- Winter sparrows and woodpeckers are often sighted on property.
- Over the past 10 years invasive plant species presence has increased notably.
- The pond enhances site beauty and should be preserved.
- There is a hardwood stand to the north of the pond that is very nice.
- There is a very old hardwood stand in the northwest corner of the site.
- There are large, mature yellow poplars to the west of the runway.
- There are large mounds of earth to the north of the runway, of uniform size and spacing, that are visible from an interior road.
- There are approximately 20 miles of mountain bike trails on the site that are also used by hikers and people walking their dogs.
- An area to the north and east of the runway is not well drained and the bike trail builders avoided it.
- The open area on the west side of the site was a community garden site approximately 10 years ago.
- Crow Branch and its tributaries are a very ecologically important part of the site.

- Suggestion that the rail line be a focus area for transit, rather than using interior site routes;
- Bedrock prevents vertical erosion of the channel of Bolin Creek, which is increasing lateral erosion of the stream banks.
- Vernal pools exist to the north of the west end of the runway.
- Quite a few Indian artifacts have been found in the former community garden area.
- Areas that were part of the former Navy runways have pioneer species vegetation that are different from the adjacent areas.
- There are piles of organic matter north of the west end of the runway that are in and around an open area. They were placed there by the University for recycling, before the drum grinder was purchased and placed in the current lay down area.
- The water quality in Crow Branch downstream of the pond appears to be poor, and it may be that the leachate from the old landfill is negatively affecting it.
- The water quality in the pond is good.
- The Carolina North tract is a very important community amenity for outdoor activities.
- There is no data on usage, but the numbers of users is thought to be high.
- There are not many recreational trails in the greater site area.
- Some of the trails on the site are very old.
- Some of the mountain bike trails on the site are well-built and some are not.
- The mountain bike community would like to volunteer to work with the University on the trails.
- The southeastern portion of the tract is not as recreationally attractive as other areas of the site.
- Individual commented that they view open fields/athletic fields as greenspace.
- The site is a very good running site, it has a rural flavor that is valuable.
- The site needs some active management now, to maintain it and prevent degradation.
- The deer population may become a problem as habitat surrounding the site shrinks.
- There is an opportunity to build bike trails through the site along Bolin Creek that would avoid car traffic and possibly connect to Barclay Road.
- High school students occasionally use trails across site to get to school.
- There are possibilities to link community greenways across the site, on the Craig and Adams tracts, and from Twin Creeks to the site.
- Local residents see the site as a destination for open space.
- Carolina North will provide an impetus for an off-road link between old and new campuses.

What are some changes that the group would like to see?

- Invasive plant species removal;
- Improved water quality;
- Trail design and management;
- Landfill and chemical site remediation;
- Recreational spaces, fields;
- More archaeological assessment of the site;
- Use of proper construction specifications for mountain bike trails, which are available through local bike clubs;
- Repair the channels of tributaries of Crow Branch that flow across gas line right of way;
- Stream bank restoration/stabilization where there is high trail use;

- Successfully prohibit River County Park could be used as a model for good bike trail design;
- Leave standing dead trees for bird habitat;
- Deer population management;
- Wildlife inventory;
- Maintain wildlife corridor to north of Homestead Road;
- There are many different ecotypes onsite, it is complicated and needs further discussion to fully explore;

Are there any data gaps?

- Viewscape locations on the site: the feeling of isolation is valued, especially along Bolin Creek;
- Habitat Map;
- User frequency data;
- GPS mapping of bike trails;
- How much ecological work does the site do for society? How much natural capital exists onsite?
- The fewer rules, the better;
- Conservation areas need to be at least 40 acres for viable wildlife habitat presentation; Forested areas, especially mature hardwoods, are very ecologically valuable.