

AGENDA

Commission for the Environment

April 14, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Orange County Solid Waste Management Administration Building
1207 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>
7:30	I.	Call to Order
7:32	II.	Additions or Changes to Agenda
7:35	III.	Approval of Minutes – March 10 (Attachment 1)
7:40	IV.	Orange County Recycling Program update CFE members will discuss their observations from the recent public hearings on funding and enhancing the County's curbside recycling program. The BOCC is scheduled to discuss matter on April 15. (Attachments 2-3)
7:50	V.	Proposed Renewable Energy and Efficiency Work Group Neal and Shaw will report on the BOCC's response to this proposal (April 8 work session) so that the CFE may begin planning for the convening of this group (Attachment 4)
8:15	VI.	Environmental Summit planning The CFE will discuss preparations for the Environmental Summit to be held on May 31 at the Maple View Farm Agricultural Education Center (Attachments 5-6)
8:45	VII.	State of the Environment 2014 Staff will review the status of the State of the Environment report and identify final tasks for CFE member involvement and assistance. Draft #8 of SOE report available from special link to DEAPR webpage
9:00	VII.	Committee Meetings If time allows, CFE will break into its standing committees (<i>Air and Energy, Land, Water</i>) to discuss final revisions to the State of the Environment report. (Attachment 7)
9:20	VIII.	Updates and Information Items Staff and/or CFE members will provide updates on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Nature of Orange photography contest (Attachment 8)➤ Intergovernmental Parks Work Group report (Attachment 9)➤ Free-Roaming Cat Task Force meetings (Attachment 10)➤ The Future of Environmental Finance Public Forum (Attachment 11)➤ Solar array project in Efland (Attachment 12)➤ Potential changes would allow clustering in Rural Buffer (Attachment 13)➤ Haw River on Top 10 List of Most Endangered Rivers (Attachment 14)
9:30	IX.	Adjournment Next meeting: May 12 (Hillsborough)

**Orange County
Commission for the Environment**

DRAFT Meeting Summary

March 10, 2014

Orange County Environment and Agricultural Center, Hillsborough

PRESENT: Jan Sassaman (Chair), May Becker, Peter Cada, Loren Hintz, David Neal, Jeanette O'Connor, Rebecca Ray, Gary Saunders, Lydia Wegman, David Welch

ABSENT: Donna Lee Jones, Steve Niezgoda

STAFF: Rich Shaw, Tom Davis

GUEST: Bill Kaiser

- I. **Call to Order** – Sassaman called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.
- II. **Additions or Changes to Agenda** – There were no changes or additions, however Hintz informed the CFE of an Orange County Expo that would be held April 4.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Sassaman asked for comments on the minutes for February 13. Wegman motioned to approve as written; Neal seconded. Approved unanimously.
- IV. **Orange County Recycling Program update** – Sassaman reminded CFE members that the County will hold public hearings on the proposed solid waste service tax district. The hearings will be on March 18 in Chapel Hill and April 1 in Hillsborough. He noted that former CFE member Terri Buckner has asked members of the CFE to help provide factual information at the meetings. Hintz and O'Connor said they plan to attend.

Sassaman reminded members of the CFE resolution in support of the proposed tax district that was adopted at the February meeting. He said members were welcome to reference that resolution in any remarks that they might make on this subject.

Sassaman handed out a draft letter that he and Neal prepared for submittal to the Chapel Hill News. The letter describes reasons for supporting the proposed solid waste service tax district for Orange County. He asked members to read the letter and offer any feedback. Comments and editorial suggestions were provided by Wegman, O'Connor, Hintz, Welsh and Ray. Neal and Sassaman thanked members for the comments and said they would submit a revised letter to the newspaper the next day.
- V. **Environmental Summit** – Sassaman thanked O'Connor and other ad hoc committee members for securing the Maple View Agricultural Education Center for the May 31 environmental summit. Sassaman said Dr. Norm Christensen is lined up as keynote speaker for the event. Shaw suggested the committee identify other potential speakers to discuss important issues highlighted in the State of the Environment report.

CFE members discussed potential topics for a panel discussion or concurrent sessions. Among the topics mentioned were invasive species identification and remediation, energy efficiency and renewable energy options, the effects of the anticipated reductions in state monitoring of surface and groundwater resources, and the ongoing conversion of hardwood forest to pine plantations across the rural landscape. Saunders noted that many people will be interested to learn more about the recent coal ash spill and fracking.

Sassaman asked the ad hoc summit committee to develop a draft program for the event. He asked Shaw to provide example materials from the 2009 summit for consideration.

CFE members agreed to begin the meeting at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments and displays, start the presentations at 10:00 a.m., and end the summit by 12 noon. Hintz suggested having note cards for members of the audience to ask questions on any topic. CFE members agreed on a panel format, and that speakers be limited to a reasonable length of time and that that all be communicated and agreed upon in advance.

Sassaman asked if staff could present an overview of the State of the Environment report, noting that David Stancil performed that duty in 2009. He asked staff to invite BOCC members to participate and to send a “save the date” notice to elected officials, advisory boards, the media, and others that were informed prior to the previous summits.

- VI. **State of the Environment 2014** – Shaw reported on the status of the report, including a summary of the changes made with help from CFE members since the February meeting. He thanked those who had provided comments on the various sections.

Shaw handed out copies of Draft #7 of the report and referred CFE members to a staff memo (Attachment 6) that listed things that still needed to be done to complete each section of the report. Shaw asked each committee to identify “critical issues” and specific recommendations to highlight at the front of the report.

Ray reported on the work she had done to develop better symbols to convey the status and trend for each environmental indicator. She asked those members who had previewed her different concepts prior to the meeting what they thought about the styles. She also passed around different samples for those who had not previewed the work. CFE members chose the image of a graduated dial, or meter reading, to convey status.

Neal noted it was difficult to convey information on both the status and trend in such an abbreviated manner. He suggested showing only the status as Good, Fair, or Poor. Other members suggested including some wording to convey trends, such as “declining,” “improving,” or “no change.” Becker noted that the trends for some environmental indicators cannot be characterized so simply. CFE members agreed to use the term “uncertain” in those cases. Ray said she would prepare a new template based on the discussion and provide to CFE members and staff by March 31.

Sassaman asked CFE members to communicate with their respective committees and decide on what issues and recommendations to highlight in the report. He asked that comments to staff be provided by March 31 so that a final draft could be distributed for review before the April 14 meeting.

- VII. **Committee Meetings** – The committees did not meet.
- VIII. **Updates and Information Items** – Information on the following subjects was included in the meeting materials and selected items were summarized by staff: a) the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Work Group proposal, b) a solar array project in Rougemont, c) wildlife pest problems, d) the Dan River coal ash spill, and e) climate change.
- IX. **Adjournment** – Sassaman adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposed Solid Waste Service Tax District March 2014

1. What is a Solid Waste Service Tax District?

It is a defined geographic area of a county where specific solid waste related services are provided and whose property owners fund the service through a tax that is set at a rate that will finance those defined services.

2. What is the Solid Waste Service Tax District that is being proposed by the Board of County Commissioners?

The Board of Commissioners are proposing a service district that would provide for every other week curbside/roadside recycling collection. The proposed district does not include waste/trash collection; only recycling. This service was previously funded by a \$38 annual Rural 3-R Fee that was billed on the annual tax bill, but that fee was eliminated following the 2012 Tax Billing. The service district is being proposed to replace the rural recycling program funding previously provided from that fee. The proposed service district will expand this recycling service to about 1,600 additional residents beyond the 13,750 households who are currently eligible for this service.

3. What if I don't recycle or take my materials to a Solid Waste Convenience Center? Is there an option whereby a property owner can opt-out of this service?

The Solid Waste Service Tax District, as with the previous Rural 3-R Fee, does not provide an exemption or opt-out option for those residents who choose not to use the service. All property that is included within the district would be assessed the district tax. As with property taxes in general, there would be no opt-out option.

4. Since I received a notice of a Public Hearing does this mean that my property will be included in the proposed district?

Yes. If you received this notice your property, or if you own multiple properties, at least one property you own is proposed to be located within the district. If more than one property is owned only those located within the proposed district would be subject to the district tax.

5. How much will I have to pay through a district tax?

The district tax rate will be set to generate funding for the every other week recycling service. It is currently estimated that the tax rate would be set at approximately 1.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value. This would mean a property with an assessed value of \$100,000 would pay \$15 per year.

6. Why not continue charging the Rural 3-R Fee of \$38/year?

The County Attorney and the County Manager recommended to the Board of County Commissioners last year that the Board abolish the Rural 3-R Fee due to some uncertainty with regard to the fee being wholly consistent with state law authorizing counties to assess these type of fees. Following that recommendation, the Board agreed it did not wish to risk continuing a practice that was not unmistakably consistent with state law, so the annual rural recycling fee was eliminated and consideration of alternative financing of the rural recycling service was initiated. After several months of examining numerous funding alternatives the Board is proposing the Solid Waste Service Tax District to generate the replacement program funding. About 13,750 residents who were eligible for the service were previously assessed the fee.

7. Will the Solid Waste Service District apply to vacant (undeveloped) land?

Yes, the district tax would apply to all property located within the proposed district without regard to whether structures or homes exist on the property.

8. If the Board chooses **not** to adopt a Solid Waste Service District and wishes to establish a service opt-out program what would the estimated cost be for annual curbside recycling service? Is there data or information relating to performance of Opt-in programs?

Key to estimation of the cost for opt-out service is the assumption made regarding how many paying customers will remain in the program. If the assumption is that of the current approximate 13,750 customers only 60% currently participate, and that of that 8,250 monthly users 20% (1,650) choose to opt-out, the estimated annual fee for service would be increased accordingly

Experience in other governmental jurisdictions (states and NC county's) provides convincing evidence that many property owners will choose not to participate, which will result in increased costs for those who do participate. Economies of scale exist in recycling collection services like most other programs and services, meaning that the more property owners that join in funding a given service results in a reduced cost per each service unit. Alternatively, as the number of fee payers is reduced, costs increase for each remaining participant. A NCDENR Recycling Specialist has spoken previously to the BOCC, as well as other recycling professionals, who have indicated the weaknesses of the so called "Opt-In" or subscription (fee for service) type recycling program.

Please note that it will take 5-6 months to establish an opt-out or subscription type service for rural curbside/roadside recycling. .

9. Would a Solid Waste Service District funding option or an opt-out (or subscription) fee for service option result in the most recyclable materials being recovered and move Orange County the furthest toward its 61% waste reduction goal? Which would cost the least per unit served?

Based on evidence from other jurisdictions (both North Carolina and out of state) a subscription fee for service option of funding the recycling collection service would yield the least quantity of recovered recyclables and result in the greatest unit cost for users of the program. The Solid Waste Service District would be the least costly per parcel served.

10. What does it mean that handicap service will continue?

Both the Urban and Rural Curbside Recycling programs maintain a special services option for handicapped and elderly residents. This service requires the collector to go to the resident's home at an agreed upon location and collect their receptacle, empty it into the truck and return the empty container to the home.

11. Has the value of the property within the proposed district been analyzed?

The total valuation of the district is located at the bottom of the map and is calculated at \$4,478,900,424.

12. Is the current participation rate for the rural program 57%? If so, how many are estimated as not using the service?

Yes, according to the latest survey of four rural routes. About 5,800 are estimated to be using the convenience centers, not recycling or recycling through alternative means.

13. How many parcels in the proposed district are not going to be paying the tax but will be receiving the service?

There are 631 tax exempt properties located in the proposed district that will not be paying the district tax. It is understood that any of those parcels that contain buildings that generate recyclables we would be required by statute to receive the service.

14. If the Rural Program participation rate is 57%, what would be the participation rate in the Urban Program for comparison?

The participation rate in the Urban Program is estimated to be 90%. Utilization of the new roll carts fitted with RFID tags will allow much more accurate calculations of set out and participation rates.

15. When roll carts are implemented will people be required to use them?

Due to the variability in the county such as geography and other differences consistent with rural living, accommodations will have to be made. When a resident expresses a desire to continue using a bin and does not wish to use a roll cart, they will be allowed to use what they think best suits their situation. They will be allowed to choose, although in many instances they will be encouraged to try a roll cart.

16. If residents will be allowed to continue to use bins if they choose rather than be required to use roll carts, and if only 57% of residents will be participating, how many roll carts will be purchased?

It is estimated that 7,000 carts would be purchased initially. Prior to implementation a more thorough assessment will be performed to match the type of recycling receptacle with resident needs and requests.

Solid Waste Tax District Public Hearing 3/18/14; 4/1/14

I attended the public hearing on 3/18. Here are my observations based upon what others have said.

1. The main problem is that the county had a good funding system which has been called into question. Many speakers supported the fee system and feared that a tax district would cost them more.
2. People with open land, forest or agricultural land should be using the Present Use Value Program (and other conservation incentives) so their tax valuation should not be high. The majority of people should pay less in tax than in the old fee since only a relative few have higher assessed properties.
3. Some people described the problem of very long private roads. How many of this type of properties are actually in the proposed tax district? Aren't the majority of homes more suburban like?
4. There are definitely some individuals who will recycle without curb side service but it is clear to me that curb side service will increase the amount of recycling in the entire community.
5. A number of people spoke about alternatives. I do not see over the short term how any of the other alternatives can be implemented.
6. Would enough money be generated if the tax was 0.01 instead of 0.015 and some of the general tax revenue was used for the education component of the recycling program?

From Loren Hintz

Chapel Hill, NC

To: David Welch
Subject: Questions about Commission on Environment discussions of Tax District
From: Jeanne Brown
Date: 21 Mar 2014

David

My concern in reading the Commission's resolution and meeting minutes is that it was accompanied by very little data and critical discussion - especially for a group that evaluates cutting edge environmental programs.

Imposing a tax on the unincorporated area will provide a funding mechanism for the county's recycling efforts; however, many of the really good criteria that are included in the resolution submitted to the BOCC (equitable, cost effective, economies of scale....) are not achieved in the service model or funding mechanism being put forward. In addition, it does little more than maintain the status quo and does not look for new ways to increase participation or provide the type of service that payors need.

In terms of public policy, a huge point to consider is this: the decision to provide outsourced services to the towns and in-house services within the county affects the ability of the county to benefit from economies of scale and supporting a tightly integrated recycling program. As a result, these decisions will end up costing unincorporated residents significantly more if we continue to try to support an in-house program. (Especially if the towns insist on 5 year contracts as I've been told).

The difference in costs and frequency of service between the two programs (\$60 per single family home) versus the unincorporated area (\$90 - \$100 and rising for opt-in; \$25 - \$200+ if assessed as a tax) suggest that it may be more economical for the county to outsource all or part of the unincorporated area's services too; however, an RFP has not been requested.

It appears that there is a perception that taxation will increase participation within the rural community leading to an increase in recycled materials/decrease in waste; however, data shows that Convenience Centers account for 42% of the county's residential recycling and testimony from those who spoke indicates that roll carts and curbside are simply not practical as their current methods of hauling recycling when they take trash to the Convenience Centers or using a small hauling company for both.

The following data has been helpful for me in evaluating this issue:

- The remaining "county" group, when lumped together in a tax district contains two large and vastly different "user" groups making single service problematic:
 - 57% curbside users (at least once a month; 7,800 properties)
 - 43% non-curbside users (Convenience Center users, small hauler users, undeveloped properties; 6,100 properties)
- Having just 7,800 "customers" does not seem to be enough to allow the county to provide the service cost-effectively as evidenced by the big difference in cost and frequency of service between in-house and out-sourced solutions.

In terms of fiscal equity, the program is inequitable to a vast majority (>50%) of landowners because it

- fails to provide a practical service for many who drive trash/recycling to Convenience Centers or use small haulers
- taxes undeveloped parcels of land
- charges vastly different amounts for similar services (the range within 2 blocks of me is \$43 - \$200)
- doesn't charge 694 tax exempt organizations.....

I attended Tuesday night's public forum which included 20 or so speakers. Everyone who spoke supports recycling with everyone explaining how they recycle. Most shared the concerns listed above.

It is my hope that the BOCC will request RFP's from Waste Industries and consider creative curbside/rural programs such as the ones being used in Catawba County which is considered to be #1 in North Carolina - before talking further about funding mechanisms.

Best

Jeanne

**ORANGE COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: David Neal, Chair, Orange County Commission for the Environment

Date: January 22, 2013

Re: Proposal for a Renewable Energy and Efficiency Work Group Convened by the CFE

Goal #1 of the 2030 Orange County Comprehensive Plan, Natural and Cultural Resources Element: *Energy conservation, sustainable use of non-polluting renewable energy resources, efficient use of non-renewable energy resources, and clean air* (Page 6-9).

The BOCC requested that the Orange County Commission for the Environment (CFE) propose a response to the August 8, 2012 letter from Jim Warren of NC WARN. The CFE recommends convening a standing work group that would support energy efficiency, renewable energy, and related sustainable development strategies in Orange County. This Renewable Energy and Efficiency Work Group (RENEW Group) would be charged with bringing public and private stakeholders together to develop policies and initiatives that promote sustainable economic development, energy efficiency, and renewable energy in Orange County. The CFE would, in turn, bring vetted proposals from the RENEW Group to the BOCC for consideration.

As it presently operates, the CFE has an Air and Energy Committee. The present committee would act as a host and liaison with the CFE for the work group and would convene meetings, workshops, and other activities of the RENEW Group. The work group would consist of CFE members, representatives of municipal and county planning boards and staff, municipal and county sustainability staff or committee members, and any BOCC who might wish to participate. The RENEW Group would host individual public workshops and forums with emphasis on specific topics such as:

- Reducing energy use in existing buildings and new construction
- Maximizing the production and use of renewable and clean energy
- Reducing carbon emissions in transportation
- Promoting strategies for offsetting carbon emissions
- Eliminating or altering existing policies or code provisions that hinder any of the above at the county level

Reducing our collective carbon emissions should be a high priority for Orange County. Global climate change is accelerating at a rate exceeding scientific projections, exacerbating drought, storms, and flooding with devastating effects. Climate scientists agree that society must make dramatic changes in the way we source and use energy in the next several years. The consequences of inaction threaten to be drastic.

The RENEW Group would provide an opportunity for Orange County to promote forward-thinking local policies with the cooperation of local government representatives, private businesses, and environmental groups. With collaboration and input from a variety of experts, municipal and county staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders, we can find creative ways to lower our carbon footprint while also giving a boost to our local economy. By coming together at a central point to share information and coordinating action, we can avoid the pitfalls of working in isolation. Finally, the RENEW Group would enhance information sharing and communication with the deployment of an Orange County Green webpage.

The CFE unanimously approved this proposal and requests the BOCC's consideration and endorsement of CFE's convening a Renewable Energy and Efficiency Work Group.

**ORANGE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE,
PARKS AND RECREATION**

MEMORANDUM

To: Commission for the Environment
From: Rich Shaw
Date: April 10, 2014
Subject: Environmental Summit 2014

The 2014 Environmental Summit will be **May 31 (9:30 am – 12 noon)** at the Maple View Agricultural Environmental Center. There will be refreshments and displays; presentations will begin at 10:00 am.

Dr. Norm Christensen (Duke Nicholas School of the Environment) has agreed to be keynote speaker for the event. Someone from DEAPR staff will provide an overview of the State of the Environment report, to be followed by a panel discussion of some key issues highlighted in the State of the Environment report. Hintz suggested having note cards for members of the audience to ask questions on any topic.

The CFE needs to identify topics and speakers for the panel discussion. Some potential topics mentioned at the February meeting were a) invasive species identification and remediation, b) energy efficiency and renewable energy options, c) the effects of the anticipated reductions in state monitoring of surface and groundwater resources, and d) the ongoing conversion of hardwood forest to pine plantations across the rural landscape. Saunders noted that people may also be interested in learning more about the recent coal ash spill and fracking.

The format and content of the meeting will be a topic of discussion at your next meeting.

An initial draft flier for advertising the summit is provided as Attachment 6.

Orange County Commission for the Environment
presents the
2014 Environmental Summit



Saturday, May 31, 2014 (9:30 am – 12 noon)
Maple View Agricultural Education Center
(see reverse for directions)



Featuring:

- Keynote Speaker – **Dr. Norman Christensen**,

 - Presentation of Orange County's
2014 State of the Environment report
 - A panel discussion focused on
Local Issues of Interest with _____,
_____, _____, and _____
- A tour of the Maple View Agricultural Education Center
- Refreshments

For more information contact Orange County's Environment & Resource Conservation
Department at 919-245-2510 or <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/deapr/index.asp>
Read the SOE 2014 at: www.co.orange.nc.us/ercd/2014_SOE_index.asp

CFE Committee Priorities

(as of February 2014)

Air and Energy Resources Committee

(May Becker, David Neal, Gary Saunders, and Jan Sassaman)

1. Recommend a variety of strategies to the BOCC that would encourage energy efficiency in new construction and existing buildings, and recommend requirements for preserving Renewable Energy sites on new land development.
2. Create a countywide composting initiative that would help reduce the disposal of organic material in landfill.
3. Examine solid waste issues and collaborate with the Solid Waste Advisory Board (SWAB) on charting a course for the future with a focus on conservation and energy reduction.
4. Research and recommend appropriate use of biofuels and look into UNC's planned use of wood to replace coal at its cogeneration plant.
5. Assist in evaluating the County's carbon footprint as follow-up to the 2005 GHG inventory.
6. Help implement the County's goal of Environmental Responsibility in County Government.
7. Monitor upcoming statewide air quality standards (O_3 75 ppb in 8-hour period; Hg 85%-90% control; $PM < 2.5 \mu m$), which could require additional controls on emissions from private and public sources.

Water Resources Committee

(Peter Cada, Donna Lee Jones, and Rebecca Ray)

1. Develop and implement a monitoring plan and associated Quality Assurance Protection Plan (QAPP) for more frequent monitoring at existing State sampling locations; identify and initiate monitoring at other locations to support State water quality objectives under the Clean Water Act. Collaborate with other entities that may support these efforts (e.g., Eno River Association).
2. Explore and pursue funding sources to increase funding for the County's groundwater observation well network program (Orange Well Net).
3. Initiate efforts to create a detailed Water Budget for Orange County.

Land Resources Committee

(Loren Hintz, Steve Niezgoda, Jeanette O'Connor, Lydia Wegman, and David Welch)

1. Revitalize effort to eliminate use of herbicides to manage vegetation in utility right of ways.
2. Help implement the development of a comprehensive conservation plan.
3. Educate the public about ways to promote biodiversity.

Contest Rules:

2013 3rd Place Youth Winner,
Katerina Gilfillen



- 1) Photographs should feature Orange County wildlife, natural resources, landscapes, or people enjoying the parks and other outdoor environments.
- 2) All photos must be taken in a natural setting (no staged photos).
- 3) Limited to photos taken in Orange County.
- 4) Orange County employees are eligible with the exception of DEAPR staff. Contest judges are ineligible.
- 5) Entries per person: Maximum of five (5) total photos.
- 6) Complete and submit a Contest Entry Form for each photo entered, found under "Breaking News" at:
<http://orangecountync.gov/deapr/>
- 7) Photo(s) must be mounted and suitable for display. The photos (excluding mounting) must be at least 8"x10".
- 8) Each photo must be accompanied by an electronic version of the photograph, either emailed, CD or DVD. Limit file formats to .gif and .jpg files (identifiable by their extensions,) with a width of 500 pixels.
- 9) DEADLINE TO ENTER: May 16, 2014.
Submit to: Orange County DEAPR,
306-A Revere Rd., PO Box 8181,
Hillsborough, NC 27278

The Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks & Recreation

(DEAPR) works to conserve and manage the natural and cultural resources of Orange County. Included within this "green infrastructure" are natural areas and nature preserves, open spaces, parks and recreation facilities, water resources, and agricultural and cultural resource lands. Consistent with the strong environmental ethic of the community, DEAPR also strives to bring environmental education, recreation, athletics and other programs to residents of the County - with a goal of promoting cultural, physical and natural stewardship and well being.



Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks & Recreation

306-A Revere Rd.
P.O. Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Phone: 919-245-2510
Fax: 919-644-3351
<http://www.orangecountync.gov/deapr/>
E-mail: lthecht@orangecountync.us

ORANGE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE,
PARKS & RECREATION

"The Nature of Orange" Photography Contest

Entry Deadline: May 16, 2014

2013 Adult Winner, Darren Strickland



919-245-2510
<http://www.orangecountync.gov/deapr/>

"The Nature of Orange" Photography Contest

The Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation (DEAPR) is proud to present its 3rd annual photography contest. The goal is to inspire exploration, celebration and appreciation of Orange County's diverse landscapes and outdoor experiences. Through photography we want you to document the beauty of our wildlife, waterways, natural resources, and people connecting with their environment.

**Deadline: All entries must be received
by May 16,
2014**

2013 1st Place Youth,
Kirby Lau



Age Divisions:

- Youth (age 18 and younger)
- Adult

Photographs should feature:

Orange County wildlife, natural resources, landscapes, or people enjoying the parks and outdoor environments.

How to Submit Your Photo:

See the Contest Rules on the reverse page.

Prizes: \$100 First, \$75 Second, and \$50 Third place cash prizes will be awarded for photos in both divisions; divisions will be judged separately. In addition, participants will receive a certificate and winning photographs will be displayed in prominent, public locations.

For more information about parks and other natural settings in Orange County visit: <http://orangecountync.gov/deapr/>

2013 3rd Place Adult, Statler Gilfillen



Owner/Use Rights:

Contestants retain the copyright to their photographs, and all rights thereto, except as follows. Orange County and DEAPR shall have the right to use the likeness, name, and/or images photographed by contestants in any and all publications, including web site entries without compensation in perpetuity.

Photos will be credited to the contestant named in the entry form. Descriptions or titles, if any, used with the photos are in DEAPR's sole discretion (see Photo Release and Agreement on the required Entry Form under "Breaking News" at: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/deapr/>)

Judging Criteria:

Relevancy to Featured Topics - Is the photo an obvious illustration of the focus of the contest?

Composition / Arrangement - Are the objects in the photo arranged in a meaningful, pleasing manner or are they "haphazard"? Did the photographer use the best angle or otherwise interesting perspective?

Focus / Sharpness - Is the object of the photo in focus? If not in sharp focus, does it appear to be an intentional effect to enhance the image in some "artistic" way?

Lighting - Did the photographer use proper lighting of the subject matter? Do any extremes of darkness or brightness lend to or detract from the image content?

Creativity - Does the photographer show some creative thought or original idea in the making of this image?

Sponsors

- Orange County Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation
- Orange County Commission for the Environment
- Orange County Cooperative Extension / 4-H
- Orange County Parks and Recreation Council

2013 2nd Place Youth, Kirby Lau



ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, PARKS & RECREATION

306-A Revere Rd.
P.O. Box 8181

Phone: 919-245-2510
Fax: 919-644-3351

<http://orangecountync.gov/deapr/>
E-mail: lthecht@orangecountync.us

From: Bob Marotto
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2014 9:17 AM
To: David Stancil
Subject: Animal Services: Wildlife & Free-Roaming Cats in Orange County

David,

We are reaching out to environmental or conservation groups based and/or active in Orange County to invite them to participate in an upcoming meeting about free-roaming cats and wildlife. The meeting is part of the effort of a task force of the Animal Services Advisory Board seeking to address free-roaming cats as a component part of the county's pet overpopulation problem.

I'm not sure whether the issue of potential and actual conflicts between cats and wildlife is "on your radar." It is an issue that has percolated since research was done suggesting that outdoor cats prey on many different kinds of wildlife (including native species) and that their predation may have substantial impacts on wildlife. A recent NYT op-ed along with responding letters gives you a sense of some of the current discussion of this issue (<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/31/opinion/a-lively-debate-over-outdoor-cats.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>).

I believe we have contact with the local Audubon Society and the Arboretum as well as some of the subject matter experts including Wildlife Resource Commission staff. But I thought you might have some suggestions and we would greatly appreciate any you might make.

Thank you,

Bob

***Bob Marotto, Director
Orange County Animal Services
(919) 968-2287***

< SEE OVER >



Media Contact: Andi Morgan, Communications Specialist
Orange County Animal Services
Phone: 919.942.7387 ext. 219
amorgan@orangecountync.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORANGE COUNTY TO HOST FREE-ROAMING CAT TASK FORCE INPUT SESSIONS

Orange County, NC (March 31, 2014)—The Orange County Animal Services Free-Roaming Cat Task Force, a subcommittee of the Animal Services Advisory Board, will offer upcoming interactive sessions for community organizations and stakeholders. The last of these is a general public input session.

The sessions began on March 5 and have been designed to gain input and valuable information. The first session was designed to seek input from various community partners and stakeholders that included include low-cost spay/neuter groups, veterinarians and veterinary personnel, educators, and others.

Upcoming sessions are as follows:

- Wednesday, April 9 – Cat Caretakers & Free-Roaming Cats
- Wednesday, April 23 – Wildlife and conservation professionals
- Wednesday, May 7 – A Listening Session with the General Public About Free-Roaming Cats

All sessions will begin at 6:45 p.m. and will be held in the Community Room of the Animal Services Center, 1601 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill. Sessions are open to the public and filled on a first come, first serve basis.

For more information about the Free-Roaming Cat Task Force and the Animal Services Advisory Board, please visit <http://www.orangecountync.gov/animalservices>

Rich Shaw

From: UNC Environmental Finance Center <announcements@sog.unc.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 9:44 AM
To: Rich Shaw
Subject: Public Forum on May 5: Future of Environmental Finance

Categories: Important

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The Future of Environmental Finance Public Forum

SAVE THE DATE:

May 5, 2014

1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

School of Government, UNC-Chapel Hill

On May 5, the UNC Environmental Finance Center will host "[The Future of Environmental Finance](#)," a free, public forum to share promising strategies for financing current and future environmental challenges.

Who Pays? With What Money?

The costs of environmental services, programs, and infrastructure continue to rise. At the same time, the individuals, communities, and governments tasked with paying for environmental protection are experiencing significant financial challenges. Whether a billion dollar effort to restore a region's polluted water supply, a \$4,000 project to weatherize a financially disadvantaged family's home, or a program to replace a small town's 50-year-old water treatment plant, all environmental initiatives share a common challenge: who will pay and and with what money?

LIVE STREAMING

If you are unable to attend the public forum in Chapel Hill, you will be able to live-stream the event on your computer. Details will be available soon on the [event web page](#).

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COLLEAGUE](#)

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environmental finance questions, the most brilliantly conceived environmental technology or program will likely fall short of achieving its goals.

Promising Strategies

This public forum will feature engaging presentations from prominent environmental finance experts and innovators from a variety of perspectives that cut across sectors and issues.

This event will foster discussion and identify emerging trends, strategies, and ideas that will help answer the basic "how will we pay" questions at the heart of successful environmental protection.

More information: For an updated list of speakers and to register for event updates, visit www.efc.sog.unc.edu/event/future-environmental-finance-public-forum or contact Lexi Kay, EFC marketing and outreach coordinator, at 919.843.3528 or akay@sog.unc.edu.

The Environmental Finance Center is part of the [UNC School of Government](#). Visit the School of Government on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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efc.sog.unc.edu Environmental Finance Center
School of Government
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3330
919.843.4958

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UNC School of Government | Knapp-Sanders Building | Campus Box 3330 | Chapel Hill | NC | 27599-3330

**ORANGE COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD
ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT**
Meeting Date: April 2, 2014

**Action Agenda
Item No. 7**

SUBJECT: Class A Special Use Permit – Solar Array off Redman Road in Cheeks Township

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Inspections

PUBLIC HEARING: (Y/N)

Yes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Applicant Submitted Evidence Via E-mail On Use of Pesticides
3. Findings of Fact

INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael D. Harvey, Planner III	245-2597
Craig Benedict, Director	245-2592

PURPOSE: To complete review of, and make a recommendation on, a Class A Special Use Permit (hereafter ‘SUP’) application proposing the development of a solar array in accordance with Section 2.7 *Special Use Permits* and Section 5.9.6 (C) *Solar Array-Public Utility* of the Orange County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

BACKGROUND: This item was presented at the February 24, 2014 Quarterly Public Hearing and the March 5, 2014 Planning Board meeting. Agenda materials from the February 24, 2014 Quarterly Public Hearing can be viewed at: <http://orangecountync.gov/occlerks/140224.pdf>. Agenda materials from the March 5, 2014 Planning Board meeting can be viewed at: <http://orangecountync.gov/planning/documents/3.5.14PBPacket.pdf>.

As discussed at the March 5, 2014 Planning Board meeting the following testimony/evidence has already been entered into the record:

- i. Staff abstract and attachments, including the SUP application and site plan.
- ii. Staff testimony on the project and its compliance with various provisions of the UDO.
- iii. Applicant testimony from Mr. Louis Iannone, Mr. Bret Niemann, Mr. Gabriel Cantor, and Mr. Richard Kirkland, on how the project complied with the UDO.

The applicant entered copies of affidavits and a real estate report, completed by Mr. Kirkland, into the record providing additional information on the project’s compliance with applicable standards.

- iv. Staff entered an email and letter from adjoining property owners into the record. The applicant testified they would address the concerns expressed by both property owners and respond in writing to the County.

STAFF NOTE: The applicant’s response was presented to the Planning Board at its March 5, 2014 regular meeting.

v. Comments from the BOCC, Planning Board, and the general public.

The applicant has submitted additional written comment(s) on the project to address questions from the public hearing about the use of chemicals for treating grass on the subject properties. This is contained within Attachment 2. Staff has reviewed the response and has no concerns related to the use of pesticides/fertilizers on the properties.

Analysis: As required under Section 2.7.4 of the UDO, the Planning Director is required to: *'cause an analysis to be made of the application'* and pass that analysis on to the reviewing body. In analyzing this request, the Planning Director offers the following:

- a. Application submittal requirements detailed within Section 2.7 of the UDO have been satisfied.
- b. The applicant has demonstrated compliance with respect to landscaping and buffering requirements as detailed within Section 6.8 of the UDO.
- c. Staff has made the determination that a formal Environmental Impact Statement would not be required per Section 6.18 of the UDO.
- d. The applicant has complied with specific development standards associated with the development of a solar facility as detailed within Section 5.9.6 (C) of the UDO.
- e. Comments received from various County agencies (i.e. Sheriff, Fire Marshal, DEAPR, Orange County Health) indicate there are no concerns associated with the request.

Please refer to the February 24, 2014 Quarterly Public Hearing packet for additional information.

- f. Staff finds the proposal is consistent with the various goals outlined within the Comprehensive Plan concerning development, including:
 - a. Natural and Cultural Systems Goal 1: Energy conservation, sustainable use of non-polluting renewable energy resources, efficient use of non-renewable energy resources and clean air.
 - b. Objective AE-15: Foster participation in green energy programs such as installation incentives for solar hot water/solar generation/solar tempering in residential or commercial construction. The County should develop programs that will link citizens and businesses with options for alternative and sustainable energy sources.
 - c. Objective AG-8: Encourage the use and production of natural fuel alternatives to petroleum based products and pursue new types of energy sources.

Planning Director's Recommendation: In accordance with the provisions of Section 2.7.4 of the UDO, the Planning Director recommends **approval** of the application subject to:

- Approval of the recommended Findings of Fact as detailed within Attachment 3,
- The imposition of the recommended conditions detailed within Attachment 3, and
- The Planning Board's and BOCC's ability to make an affirmative finding on the general standards outlined within Section 5.3.4 of the UDO.

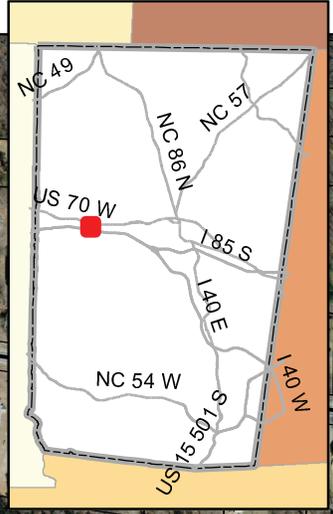
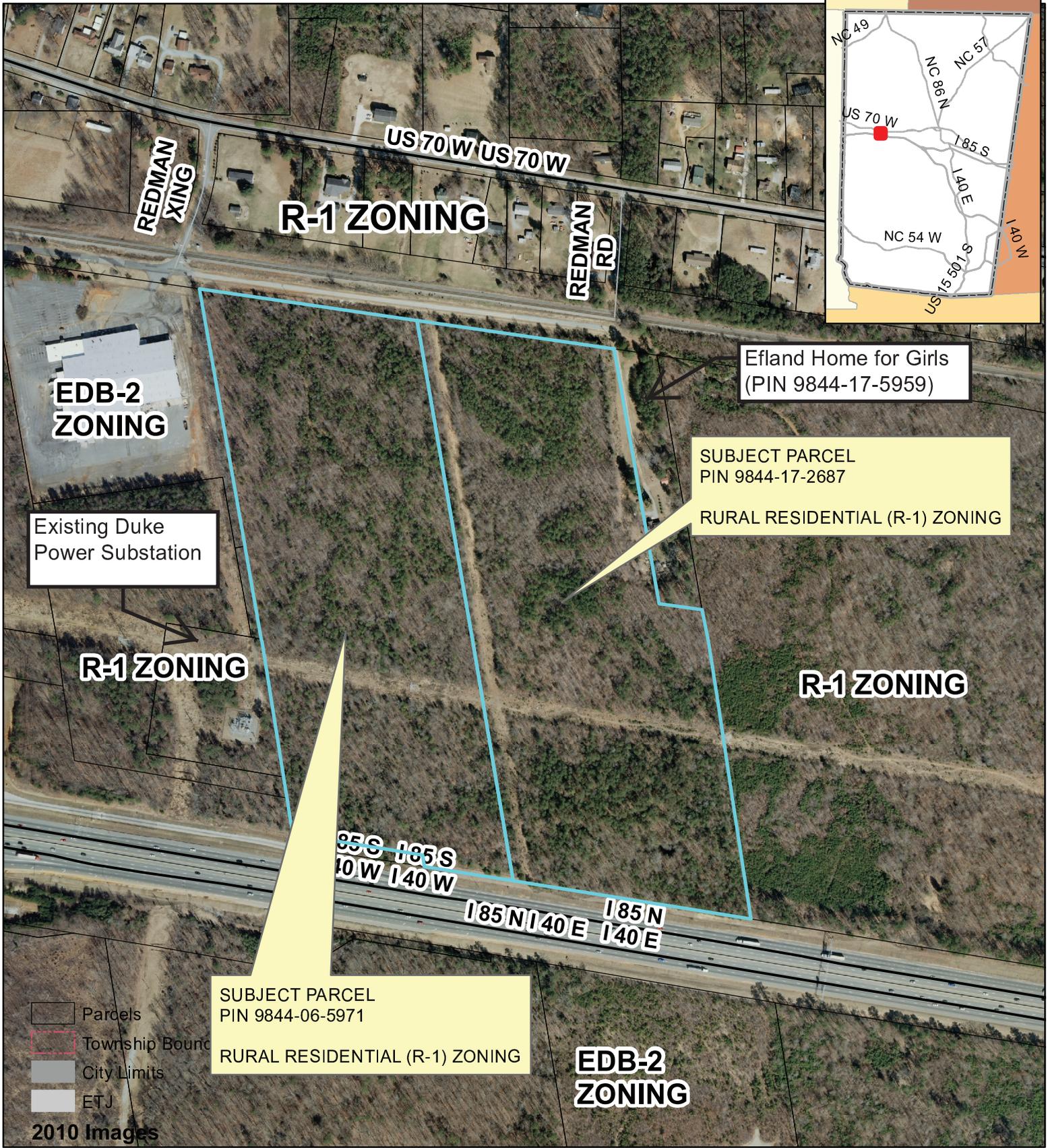
Public Hearing Procedural Information: In accordance with Section 2.7.8 (A) (3) of the UDO, the BOCC has requested that the Planning Board recommendation be made available in time for the May 8, 2014 BOCC regular meeting. As a procedural note, additional comments on the application must be submitted in writing to the Planning Board in order to become part of the official record of these proceedings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Staff has determined the project would not require augmentation of County budgetary outlays to support services and that anticipated revenues from property taxes should supplement increases in cost.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Director recommends the Board:

1. Deliberate as necessary,
2. Review the Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval as contained in Attachment 3,
3. If deemed necessary, suggest additional conditions or modifications to the site plan, and
4. Make an affirmative recommendation to the BOCC regarding the Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval as detailed within Attachment 3.

**VICINITY MAP - STRATA SOLAR
CLASS A SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST**



Efland Home for Girls
(PIN 9844-17-5959)

SUBJECT PARCEL
PIN 9844-17-2687
RURAL RESIDENTIAL (R-1) ZONING

SUBJECT PARCEL
PIN 9844-06-5971
RURAL RESIDENTIAL (R-1) ZONING

1 inch = 400 feet

0 500

Orange County Planning and Inspections Department
01/10/2011

[Return to Agenda](#)

STRATA SOLAR LLC
50101 Governors Drive Chapel Hill NC 27517

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: HERBICIDE

Herbicide use on Solar Farms owned and operated by Strata Solar will be applied at the rate suggested by the manufacture. All spraying will be done by a Licensed North Carolina Pesticide Applicator or an employee working directly under the supervision of a license holder. Persons applying herbicides will use proper PPE including but not limited to long pants and long sleeved shirts, eye protection, chemical resistant gloves and boots, and respirators depending on weather conditions. Any PPE that comes in contact with the herbicide will be washed according to the manufacturers recommendations. If there are no recommendations given, soap and hot water are to be used. All PPE will be washed separately form regular clothing. All persons who come into contact with the chemicals will wash hands with soap and warm water before visiting the toilet, eating, or using chewing tobacco. Chemicals will be used only where there is no chance of contamination to ground water or wetlands. All empty containers will be disposed at the proper location and with local codes. Should there be a major spill of chemicals, the proper authorities will be contacted and the appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the site is safe and cleanup has been done correctly.

Herbicides are typically applied to the areas under the racks holding the solar modules. These areas are sprayed two times per year. This has been shown to keep the weeds and grass under control so as not to shade the array. The fence line will also be sprayed at this time. There has been no need to spray selective broadleaf herbicides on the entire farm. Spraying will be done according to weather patterns. No spraying will take place when there are windy or rainy conditions in the immediate forecast.

Organic Herbicide use is being field tested and might come in to play in the future. Herbicide use is limited to the fence line where sheep are being used to manage the vegetation. All MSDS labels can be found on the manufacturer's web sites. These will also be on the truck applying the herbicide. These include but are not limited to Roundup Pro, Spectricide, 2,4d generic brands, and other generic glyphosate brands.

*Should there be an emergency, please contact the local authorities
and contact the Strata Solar office
(919) 960-6015*

STRATA SOLAR LLC
50101 Governors Drive Chapel Hill NC 27517

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: FERTILIZER

Fertilizer use on all farms owned and operated by Strata Solar LLC will be done in accordance to manufacturer's recommendations. All Fertilizer applications will be done by a licensed North Carolina Pesticide Applicator or an employee working directly under the supervision of a license holder. Persons applying fertilizers will use proper PPE including but not limited to long pants and long sleeved shirts, eye protection, chemical resistant gloves and boots, and respirators depending on weather conditions. Any PPE that comes in contact with the fertilizer will be washed according to the manufacturers recommendations. If there are no recommendations given, soap and hot water are to be used. All PPE will be washed separately from regular clothing. All persons who come into contact with the chemicals will wash hands with soap and warm water before visiting the toilet, eating, or using chewing tobacco. Chemicals will be used only where there is no chance of contamination to ground water or wetlands. All empty containers will be disposed at the proper location and with local codes. Should there be a major spill of chemicals, the proper authorities will be contacted and the appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the site is safe and cleanup has been done correctly.

Fertilizers are applied based on two sources. One is a standard that is written on the plan approved by each local authority. **On other farms that have been built in Orange County, the recommended rate of application for fertilizer use is 1,000 pounds per acre of 10-10-10. The suggested application is a split application of 500 pounds per acre in the spring and 500 pounds per acre in the fall.** We also take suggestions from soil samples taken from the site and analyzed by the North Carolina Extension Agency. This provides us with a more accurate representation of the amendments needed. All fertilizer applications will be done in consideration to weather patterns. No fertilizer will be applied when a large storm event is expected.

All fertilizers applied will have MSDS sheets available on the truck doing the application, on the manufactures website, and are available upon request from Strata Solar. Fertilizer use is limited on sites where there are sheep managing the grass.

*Should there be an emergency, please contact the local authorities
and contact the Strata Solar office
(919) 960-6015*

**ORANGE COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD
ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT**
Meeting Date: April 2, 2014

**Action Agenda
Item No.** 11

SUBJECT: Joint Planning Land Use Plan and Agreement Amendments – Revisions to Existing Language Ensuring Agricultural Activities are Allowed Throughout the Rural Buffer as well as Density and Minimum Lot Size Clarification(s)

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Inspections

PUBLIC HEARING: (Y/N)

No

ATTACHMENTS:

Pages of Joint Planning Land Use Plan and Agreement Proposed for Amendment (includes Agreement in its entirety for reference)

INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael D. Harvey, Planner III (919) 245-2597
Craig Benedict, Director (919) 245-2592

PURPOSE: To receive an update and briefing from staff on proposed amendments to the Joint Planning Land Use Plan (hereafter ‘the Plan’) and Joint Planning Agreement (hereafter ‘JPA’).

This item is scheduled for the March 27, 2014 Joint Planning Public Hearing and it is expected to be on the May Planning Board agenda for a recommendation. Staff thought it would be helpful to provide a briefing at the April Planning Board meeting to familiarize Planning Board members with the proposed amendment.

BACKGROUND: In October 1986 Orange County and the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro adopted the Plan outlining acceptable levels of development within what became the County’s Rural Buffer land use classification. In 1987 the participating entities adopted the JPA establishing parameters for the review and approval of development projects within the area.

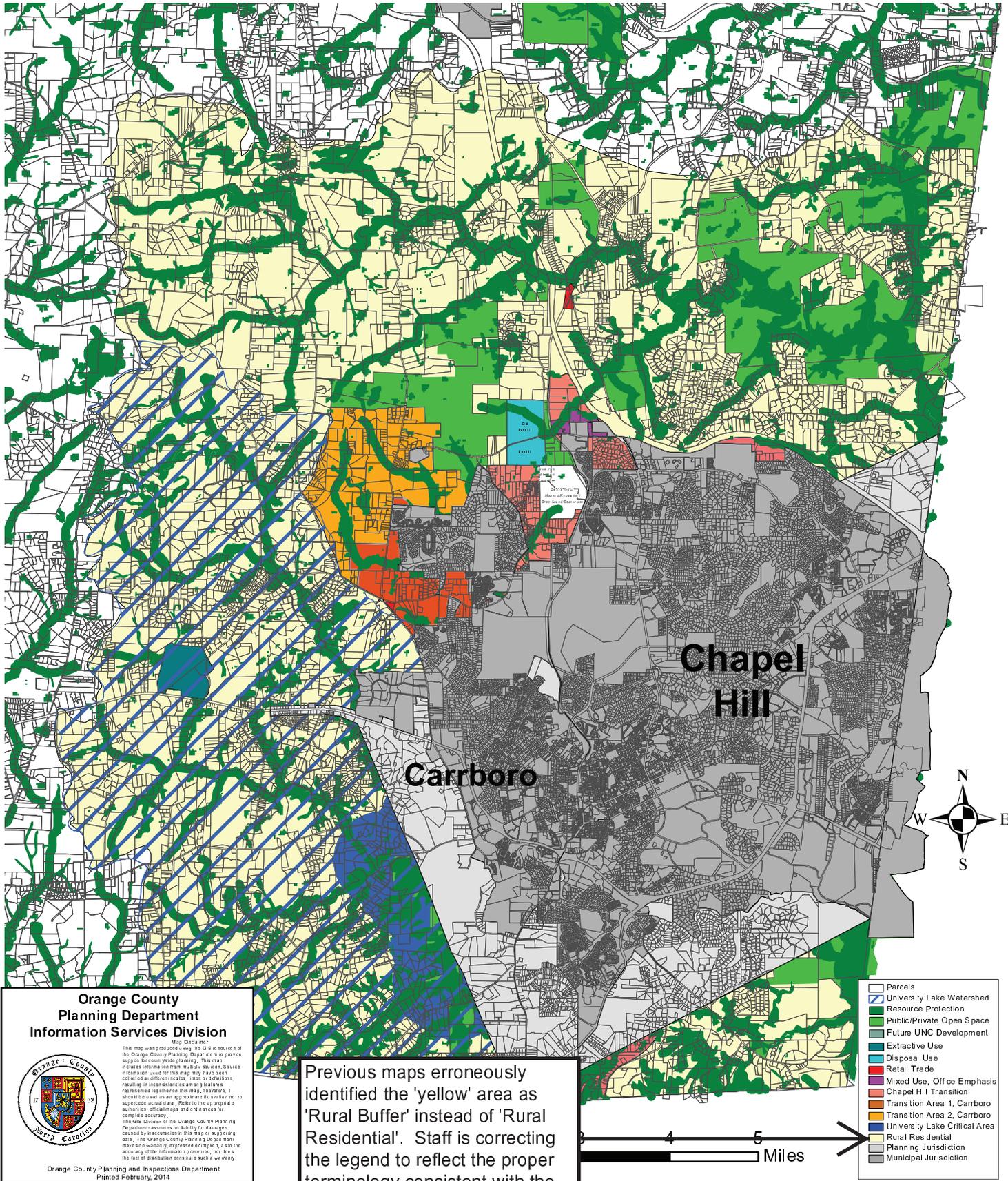
The Plan can be viewed utilizing the following link: <http://orangecountync.gov/planning/documents/JPALUPDocument.pdf>. A copy of the JPA is contained within the Plan in Appendix A, beginning on page 92. The Plan Land Use Map can be viewed at: <http://orangecountync.gov/planning/documents/JPALandUsePlanMap.pdf>.

Abstract packages from the March 27, 2014 Joint Planning Public Hearing can be viewed at: <http://orangecountync.gov/occlerks/140327JPH.pdf>.

As previously indicated at the April 2, 2014 Planning Board meeting staff will review the parameters and history of the Plan and JPA and discuss the proposed amendments. The Board will not be asked to take any action on the proposed amendments until the May 7, 2014 regular meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Director recommends the Board receive staff’s presentation.

Orange County - Chapel Hill - Carrboro JOINT PLANNING AREA - LAND USE PLAN



**Orange County
Planning Department
Information Services Division**

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Orange County Planning and Inspections Department
Printed February, 2014

Previous maps erroneously identified the 'yellow' area as 'Rural Buffer' instead of 'Rural Residential'. Staff is correcting the legend to reflect the proper terminology consistent with the Plan.

- Parcels
- University Lake Watershed
- Resource Protection
- Public/Private Open Space
- Future UNC Development
- Extractive Use
- Disposal Use
- Retail Trade
- Mixed Use, Office Emphasis
- Chapel Hill Transition
- Transition Area 1, Carrboro
- Transition Area 2, Carrboro
- University Lake Critical Area
- Rural Residential
- Planning Jurisdiction
- Municipal Jurisdiction

Group: Clean up Haw River

CONSERVATIONISTS PLACE WATERWAY 9TH IN TOP 10 OF 'MOST ENDANGERED'

4/9/14 News and Observer

By CRAIG JARVIS
cjarvis@newsobserver.com

A fragile and in places modest waterway, the Haw River has run its 110-mile course through decades of environmental battering from industries and cities.

Now substantially restored from its worst years, the Haw still faces significant threats from polluted water runoff, degrading sewer pipes and health hazards in Jordan Lake that the state has been slow to clean up.

That's why a national clean-river advocacy group has named the Haw as No. 9 on its list of the Top 10 most endangered rivers in the country. American Rivers will announce this year's list on Wednesday.

It's not a list of the most polluted rivers in the country. Rather, it's a public-relations tool for local activists to use to try to save rivers that can realistically benefit from help before it's too late.

"It's to encourage people to take the threat to heart, and take action

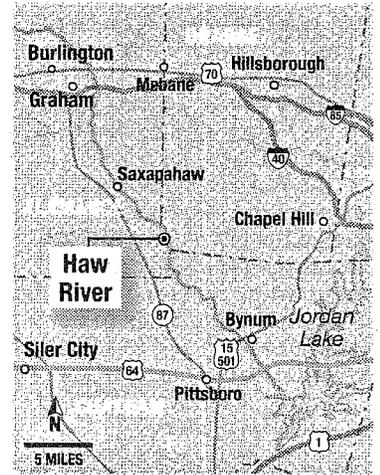


Joe Jacob, owner of the Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co., loads up paddles Tuesday for a whitewater canoeing class at Elon University.

so it's no longer a problem," Peter Raabe of the American Rivers North Carolina office said Tuesday. "In particular, for the Haw, the solution is relatively simple: Reinstate the cleanup plan."

The Haw is a tributary of Jordan Lake, a dammed reservoir that is a major recreation area and the drink-

ing water supply for five counties. In 2009, state legislators wrapped up four years of efforts and wrote a plan to clean the lake by installing wetlands, retention ponds and other stormwater controls in development projects upstream. But upstream municipalities have balked at the huge costs involved.



The News & Observer

Last year, the General Assembly put those rules on hold, and decided to try out new technology – floating, solar-powered rotation devices to clear the lake of algae. Environmentalists think the only way to clean things up is to focus on the source of pollution by enacting the

SEE **HAW RIVER**, PAGE 7B

rules.

But there has been little motivation to tackle an expensive problem that only gets attention when something goes wrong, as it did in February when a sewer line crack in Burlington spilled 3.5 million gallons of untreated sewage into the Haw River.

"Most of it is underground," Raabe said. "Whether you're flushing the toilet or watching water go into the drain, you don't have to think about it again. It's not a pot hole you're running over in your car every day. It's really easy to put it in the back of your mind and not have to worry about until there's a major break or kids swimming become sick because there's too much algae.

"We need a crisis to move some of these discussions forward. We're not in crisis mode yet, but if we keep going down the path we have been, there will be a crisis."

Saving what you love

Joe Jacob has been paddling the Haw for the past three decades. Jacob, a former biologist for the Nature Conservancy, now runs a canoe and kayak outfitter in Saxapahaw.

He says the river looks better than it did before the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 started improving waterways like the Haw. But it's the less visible effects that build up over time that worry him.

"If humans lived to be 300 years old, we would see the impacts of what we do," Jacob said Tuesday. "Nature isn't working in cycles of 60 or 70 years."

Jacob said he started his riverside business to encourage people to care about what happens to the Haw. "If you don't love and care about something you're less like to defend it," Jacob said. "That's what we're about."

Jacob hopes the American Rivers list will further that goal.

"I am glad it's getting this kind of attention," he said. "It may hurt business but it may help save the river. ... Conservation is good for businesses – not necessarily so in reverse."

Raabe says action taken within the next year and a half could save the Haw River. He thinks industries could step up with new technological solutions.

"In the current regulatory climate we haven't been seeing that interest by the regulators to do those types of things," he said. "There are opportunities available for smart investment to actually resolve this problem."

Jarvis: 919-829-4576;
Twitter: @CraigJ_NandO

America's Most Endangered Rivers

No. 1 – San Joaquin River, Calif.

No. 2 – Upper Colorado River System, Colo.

No. 3 – Middle Mississippi River in Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky

No. 4 – Gila River, N.M.

No. 5 – San Francisquito Creek, Calif.

No. 6 – South Fork Edisto River, S.C.

No. 7 – White River, Colo.

No. 8 – White River, Wash.

No. 9 – Haw River, N.C.

No. 10 – Clearwater/Lochsa Rivers, Idaho