

EROSION CONTROL DIVISION

A division of the Planning and Inspections Department, **Erosion Control** enforces the Erosion Control and Stormwater Ordinances, administers the Neuse Buffer Rule, reviews erosion control plans, issues plan approvals and land disturbance permits, inspects sites, conducts surface water identifications for Orange County stream buffers, and investigates stormwater complaints & unauthorized land disturbances.

WHEN DO I NEED A LAND DISTURBANCE PERMIT?

An erosion control plan must be submitted for review and approval to obtain a land disturbance permit whenever either of the following applies:

- Clearing and grading *exceeds* 20,000 sq. feet **OR**
- Any clearing within University Lake, Cane Creek, or Upper Eno Watersheds. Waivers can be issued for clearings of less than 10,000 sq. feet, depending on topography and proximity to surface waters.

HOW DO I OBTAIN A LAND DISTURBANCE PERMIT?

- Prepare and submit a completed application form along with an erosion control plan.
- Pay appropriate plan review & land disturbance permit fees.
- Erosion Control will review the plan and issue a land disturbance permit for approved plans.

***NOTE:** A Land Disturbance Permit must be obtained any land disturbance begins. *

FEES PER ACRE OF DISTURBANCE:

Fees	Rural	Urban	Intense Urban
Plan Review	\$158.00	\$272.00	\$507.00
Permit	\$310.00	\$646.00	\$1,241.00
Total	\$468.00	\$918.00	\$1748.00

CAN I GET THIS INFORMATION ON THE WEB?

Yes...The County's Erosion Control web page has information and online application forms. Downloadable copies of Ordinances and FAQ sheets are also found on this site. Visit our website:

www.co.orange.nc.us/planning

STREAM BUFFER RULES

In addition to enforcement of the Erosion Control and Stormwater Ordinances, the Erosion Control Division works closely with the Current Planning staff to help implement riparian buffer regulations.

WHAT ARE RIPARIAN BUFFERS?

Riparian areas are the upland areas adjacent to streams, lakes, wetlands or other surface waters. Leaving a natural, undisturbed strip of land along our water bodies provides a transition zone between the surface water and the human land uses upstream. This transition zone is called a riparian buffer, or more simply, a stream buffer. Stream buffers along rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands provide for diffuse flow of runoff, maintain bank stability, and remove nitrogen, phosphorus, and other pollutants from stormwater before it reaches our waterways. Stream buffers are also complex ecosystems that provide habitat and improve the health of the wildlife they shelter, as well as providing open space for people to enjoy. For riparian buffers to be most beneficial, they must remain undisturbed in their natural state. A healthy, forested buffer is one of the most effective ways to protect our water resources.

WHERE ARE STREAM BUFFERS REQUIRED?

All four of the municipalities that have jurisdictions within Orange County have stream buffer requirements, and each set of rules is different. If you are doing work in Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Hillsborough or Mebane, you should contact their Planning Departments to ensure that you do not violate their stream buffer rules. In Orange County's Jurisdiction, stream buffers are required on all "Water Features." Water feature is defined as an area that exhibits verifiable evidence of a presence of water in the soil. Examples of water features include, but are not limited to, perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, springs, artesian wells, irrigation wells, marshes or swamps, wetlands, and natural drainage ditches. If a water feature is present on your property, the width of the buffer will vary depending on a number of factors. The watershed, adjacent slopes, existing vegetation, development density, and floodplain requirements will all be considered in the buffer width calculation. To determine the buffer widths required on your property, please contact Orange County's Current Planning Staff.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A WATER FEATURE ON MY PROPERTY THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE STREAM BUFFER RULES?

Larger water features subject to the Orange County stream buffer rules are present on USGS or Soil Survey maps, but many smaller ones are not. If there is a wet-weather ditch, dry creek bed, swamp, marshy area or some other drainage feature on your property, it probably requires a buffer. The Current Planning staff can generally tell you where stream buffers are required after consulting numerous maps. However, when questions arise, the Erosion Control Division can conduct a Surface Water Identification (SWID) on the property. If a SWID is required, please ask the Current Planning or Erosion Control staff for a SWID Request Form.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PROTECT THE BUFFER?

Orange County stream buffers must remain undisturbed in their natural state. This means no structures or built-upon areas such as patios can be placed in them, no mowing, bush hogging, or tree cutting is allowed, and no fertilizer is to be applied. If you have questions about what can be done in the buffer, please contact the Current Planning staff.



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The ultimate responsibility for adherence to the stream buffer rules falls on the landowner. Unauthorized impacts to the buffer are violations, which are enforced by Orange County Zoning.

NEUSE RULES

The Erosion Control Division has delegated authority from the NC Division of Water Quality to implement the Neuse Rules in Orange County. Since Orange County's stream buffers are more stringent, the Neuse Buffer Rules are only significant in Hillsborough's jurisdiction. For Neuse Stream Origin Determinations in Hillsborough, or other questions about the application of the Neuse Rules in Orange County, please contact the Erosion Control staff.

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES
AND
CONTACTS**

Planning & Inspections Department

Craig Benedict
Planning Director
(919) 245-2592

Current Planning Division

Robert Davis
Current Planning Supervisor
(919) 245-2580

Inspections Division

Susan Mellott
Code Enforcement Supervisor
(919) 245-2593

Environmental Health Department

Ron Holdway
Environmental Health Director
(919) 245-2371

**Environment, Resource,
& Conservation Department**

Dave Stancil
ERCD Director
(919) 245-2598

Carrboro Planning Department

(919) 918-7324

Chapel Hill Planning Department

(919) 968-2728

Hillsborough Planning Department

(919) 732-1270, Ext. 73

Mebane Planning Department

(919) 563-5901

INSPECTORS AND OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., M-F

Staff:

Reynolds (Ren) Ivins
Erosion Control Supervisor
(919) 245-2586

Terry Hackett
Erosion Control Officer II /
Stormwater Resource Officer
(919) 245-2588

Wesley Poole
Erosion Control Officer I
(919) 245-2587

Don Beaddles
Erosion Control Officer I
(919) 245-2584



Orange County

Planning & Inspections Department
Erosion Control Division

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