



Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, Inc.

Valley River Riparian Enhancement & Stormwater Management Project
Murphy High School Track

History

Murphy H.S. graduate and Cherokee County resident, Eric Mulkey, contacted various agencies and organizations in summer 2007 about removing trash and brushy non-native vegetation from the wooded area along Valley River at the Murphy HS track. Callie Moore, executive director of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition visited the site with Mr. Mulkey and Keith Wood of Cherokee County Cooperative Extension. While walking the site, the group noticed (in addition to the aforementioned issues) that approximately 350 feet of the river bank is moderately eroding and unstable. It presents an ongoing safety hazard, but also could be severely detrimental to water quality and aquatic ecology should it wash out during a storm event. Ms. Moore also noted several opportunities to improve stormwater drainage/treatment at the site.

In June 2008, HRWC received a \$65,000 grant from the NC Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Program. Shortly thereafter, the Cherokee Co. Soil & Water Conservation District received nearly \$14,000 from the NC Community Conservation Program to assist with construction of stormwater best management practices. A minimum of \$35,000 in matching funds must be contributed by the project partners; however, in-kind services and volunteer time can be utilized to help meet the match.

Proposed Actions

We would like to involve teachers and students from both the high school and middle school in the project to maximum extent feasible.

Site "Clean-up" Actions

- Remove all trash from the site (this includes construction debris, concrete, logs, etc.)

Riparian Buffer Restoration

- Create and implement a plan for the removal of non-native tree/shrub species
- Bring in additional soil to fill in some areas and scrape other areas to create a suitable planting surface
- Plant native trees and reestablish grass on affected areas

Bank Restoration

- Contract with a consultant for an engineering design to stabilize the bank
- Obtain permits for construction
- Construct the plans (taking special precautions to protect the track surface)
- Plant native trees and shrubs

Stormwater Controls

- Contract with a consultant to design a better system for draining stormwater from the track site (hopefully to include some level of treatment)
- Construct a new parking lot using innovative stormwater BMPs to control runoff

Education & Publicity

- Post signs/kiosks at the site that describe the work that was done
- Use the area as a demonstration site for stormwater BMPs

Partners

Baker Engineering
Cherokee County Board of Education
Cherokee County Soil & Water Conservation District
Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition
Murphy High School
Murphy Middle School
Natural Resources Conservation Service
NC State University, Water Quality Group
Town of Murphy

Summary of Actions To-Date

HRWC and project partners have held several meetings and established a working timeline of activities at the site. Baker Engineering out of Asheville, NC has been contracted to design the bank stabilization work and NC State University Water Quality Group has been contracted to suggest (and design) stormwater best management practices (BMPs) for the site. A meeting was held on March 18, 2009 at Murphy High School for HRWC to discuss the project further with teachers and administrators from both the high school and middle school. A workday is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 22, 2009** which is Earth Day! Participating teachers will bring his/her respective classes out to the track during the regular class period on that day to pick up trash and begin the laborious task of removing invasive plants. A second workday is planned for May; hopefully it can be scheduled to coincide with a school-wide workday planned to take place whenever the MHS roof is completed. Construction on the new parking lot BMPs is scheduled to begin in June 2009.

Photos



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The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition works to facilitate water quality improvements through education and voluntary restoration programs in the Hiwassee River watershed above Apalachia dam, within Towns and Union counties in Georgia and Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina.