

Reasons to Save Black Meadow Ridge at West Point on the Eno City Park

I. ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS ~

1. Protection of the water quality in a critical watershed area which affects the Eno River, the source of drinking water for Falls Lake reservoir in Raleigh and the future Teer Quarry in Durham.
2. Preservation of the nationally significant Eno River Aquatic Habitat which contains endangered and threatened species, among them, the Neuse River waterdog, the yellow lamp mussel, the Roanoke bass aka the red-eye, the panhandle pebblesnail (Virginia pebblesnail), and the Atlantic pigtoe.
3. Preservation of the extensive wildlife corridor provided by the contiguous parklands of West Point on the Eno City Park and the Eno River State Park within our increasingly urbanized region. A conservation model for the state, this wildlife corridor gives animals passage into four counties and runs some 20 miles on the Eno, reaching beyond to the Falls of the Neuse Gamelands.
4. Protection from increased flooding at West Point, which will bring silt and pollution to natural habitat and will potentially damage the historic site, in particular the milldam and gristmill.
5. Preservation of a sizable unspoiled old forest, which mitigates climate change on a local level and provides the benefits of cleaning the water and air.
6. Renewed commitment by the City to the 50 year old conservation achievement of saving West Point on the Eno which has been of immeasurable benefit to Durham, the Triangle, and the State. By preserving Black Meadow Ridge as an intrinsic, historic part of West Point, the City will continue to protect the nationally significant cultural and natural heritage of West Point on the Eno City Park.

II. RECREATION BENEFITS ~

7. Providing equitable access to natural areas and nature trails by expanding the healthful quiet forest of West Point on the Eno City Park. As the city grows this park on the bus line provides access to an unspoiled, secluded natural place - an enhanced opportunity for all of Durham's citizens to explore and enjoy.
8. Continuation of the water-related activities of swimming, fishing, wading and canoeing in the clean Eno River, which is dependent on keeping environmental protections in place. If the wildlife habitat is preserved, human use is enhanced, because the water is clean and safe for such recreation. Should the river's water quality be degraded, these activities cannot continue to be safely enjoyed.

III. CULTURAL BENEFITS ~

9. Preservation of the historical identity of West Point on the Eno, keeping the rural character of 404 acres free of the intrusion of modern construction on the view-shed and preventing damage and alteration of the original topography, the historic mill, and its historic waterworks and the milldams. This living history museum is on the National Register of Historic Places and is one of Durham's two Cultural Heritage Parks.
10. The preservation of an unspoiled place with Native American and African American history which predates the City and County of Durham. In 1878 Dilsey Holman, who had once been enslaved, bought 88 acres of this ridge, a notably large property for an African American woman in the time of Reconstruction.
11. Protection of the Holman Cemetery and preservation of the historic wagon trail which runs between the cemetery and the Buffalo Trail at West Point. Researchers are arriving at the conclusion that it was originally a slave cemetery, the final resting place for many from the enslaved families who once lived there in association with West Point Mill and the McCown homeplace.
12. Protection of the historic character of the home, darkroom and surroundings of the now internationally recognized photographer Hugh Mangum. His egalitarian photographs from the late Victorian period feature Black and White, young and old, rich and poor, side-by-side, for he welcomed all into his studio. He left us many scenic photographs of West Point, which include West Point Mill in the 1908 flood and the Sennett Hole, itself a millsite predating 1752.