



News Release

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‘A Clean Water Habitat’ Public Art Now Adorns South Ellerbe Stormwater Restoration Project

Students from Three Durham Schools Worked to Beautify Construction Fence at Future Wetlands

DURHAM, N.C. – Passersby will now notice new public art adorning the construction fencing around the South Ellerbe Stormwater Restoration project thanks to the efforts of local teachers and students from three schools in Durham.

The City’s Public Works Department partnered with artist-educator Lee Moore Crawford to produce artwork by local students for the project. The students answered the question, “Who will show up in this wetland restoration project?” with [colorful images](#) of birds, turtles, fish, and native plants. Crawford reproduced the images on banners that she and the students displayed earlier this week on the project’s construction fence along 808 W. Trinity Ave.

Crawford led workshops at Durham School of the Arts, George Watts Elementary, and Central Park School for Children to produce art for the banners. She introduced the wetlands restoration project to students and imagined with them what animals will visit once native plants and meandering streams replace the concrete, pavement, and bricks. The City is currently transforming what was once the Duke Diet and Fitness Center into a stormwater wetland to improve water quality in Ellerbe Creek and Falls Lake, a downstream drinking water source.

“Durham residents have enthusiastically embraced the idea that we are creating an urban nature refuge that will also treat stormwater,” said Sandi Wilbur, project manager with the Stormwater & GIS Division of the City’s Public Works Department. “Involving students from three schools within walking distance of the project is a great way to help people understand what is coming. We truly appreciate the efforts and leadership from Crawford, the student artists, and teachers Judy Compton, Nancy Parler, and Amber Santibañez for providing an artful preview of this future public green space.”

Design and permitting work continue for the [South Ellerbe Stormwater Restoration](#), and the department expects to begin construction late next year.

About the Public Works Department Stormwater and GIS Services Division

The [Stormwater and GIS Services Division](#) with the City of Durham Public Works Department is guided by the City’s [Strategic Plan](#) goals of stewardship of the City’s physical and environmental assets and innovative and high-performing organization. Activities include storm drainage design and plans review; inspecting and maintaining City-owned drainage systems; enforcing stormwater ordinances and regulations; education and outreach; stream monitoring, restoration, and watershed master planning; maintaining multiple layers of the City’s geographic information; and stormwater billing. To learn more, follow on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).