



To: Danny Smith, Director, NC Dept of Environmental Quality - Division of Water Resources, NC DEQ-DWR

CC: Paul Wojoski, Supervisor, NC Dept of Environmental Quality - Division of Water Resources, NC DEQ-DWR
Rick Trone, 401 Buffer Coordinator, NC Dept of Environmental and Natural Resources, NC DENR
John Fullwood, Acting Director, NC Division of Parks and Recreation, NC NCR
Carol Tingley, Deputy Director, NC Division of Parks and Recreation, NC NCR
Scott Letchworth, Park Superintendent, William B. Umstead State Park “
Reid Wilson, Secretary, NC Department Natural and Cultural Resources (NC NCR)
Mike Landguth, President/CEO, RDU Airport Authority
RDUAA Board
Wake County Board of Commissioners

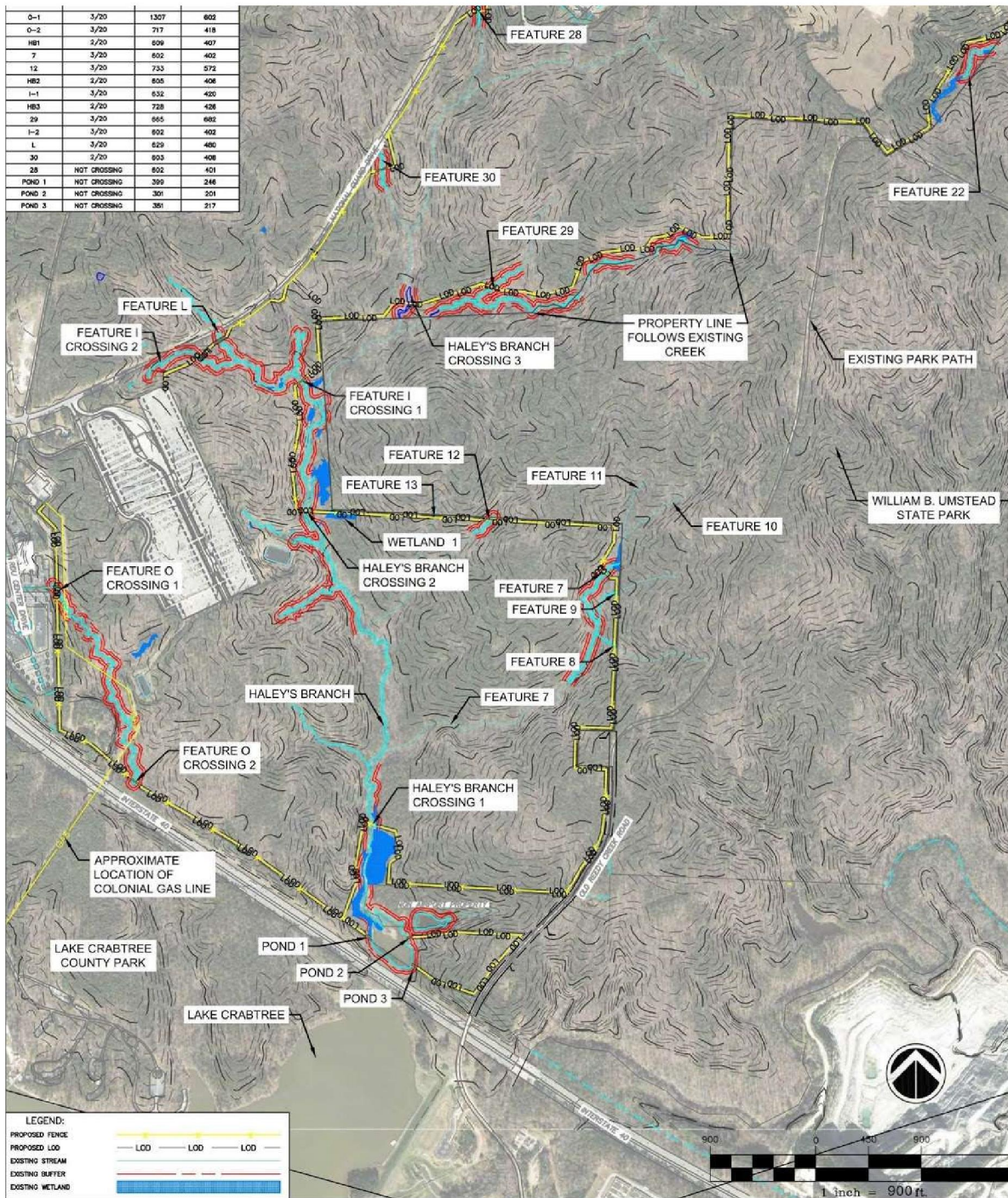
From: Hwa Huang, Chair and Executive Committee Member, Sierra Club Capital Group

Re: Environmental concerns about proposed fence impacting the integrity of Umstead State Park

The Capital Group of the North Carolina Sierra Club would like to call your attention to deny the resubmission of a proposal by the RDU Airport Authority (RDUAA) in October 2020 to once again build a chain link fence along the environmentally sensitive boundary of William B. Umstead State Park and the Old Reedy Creek Road greenway corridor. The Capital Group previously sent in a letter stating our opposition toward the fencing project when RDUAA first submitted their proposal in January 2020. The Capital Group remains opposed to the fencing project, as little has changed in the proposal in terms of the environmental impact it would have on the William B. Umstead State Park, the trail accessing the Park, and the Neuse River Buffer.

The Capital Group is a volunteer-led group of the national Sierra Club, the oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization in the country. Our group serves 11 counties in central North Carolina, including Wake County, and we are actively engaged in local efforts to protect the environment and our communities. On behalf of our 10,000+ members and supporters, we are writing to urge you to deny the proposed fence and other environmentally detrimental developments to be built near the Umstead State Park for the following reasons:

1. The RDUAA must employ measures to avoid or minimize disturbance to the Neuse River Buffer. The DEQ has already denied the fence application before. The previous proposal by RDUAA would involve 30 feet of clear-cutting of trees. The current, re-submitted proposal, only narrows the buffer disturbance to the narrowing of clearing to 10 feet in some of zones 1 and 2 of Neuse River Buffer, does not narrow through all the wetland crossings and still retains the 30 feet of deforested path along the border of William B. Umstead State Park.
2. The barbed wire fence would cross the Haley's Branch and many wetlands, harming wetlands and streams, and losing forests. The trees serve a role in filtering the rain water before reaching Crabtree Creek, which ultimately flows into Umstead State Park. Without these buffers, water quality will be negatively impacted in the state park.
3. The 30-foot wide clearing of forests is for the RDUAA to patrol the fence with trucks and 4-wheelers. RDUAA still did not address in their new proposal how the streams and wetlands will be protected from patrolling trucks and 4-wheelers crossing the stream and wetlands.
4. The RDUAA proposes a gate crossing at the larger streams that will open during a rain event. However, they did not detail how they will manage their gates, and how they will control the water flow, not only during inclement weather, that does not still risk vegetation and debris backup thereby damaging the stream.
5. The fence as it is being proposed would still sever the public's access to the William B. Umstead State Park via the Reedy Creek Trail, which would also disrupt the East Coast Greenway and the US1 Bike routes. The attached graphic in the letter, which was submitted along with RDUAA's request to the DEQ, showed the fence severing the Reedy Creek Multi-use Trail being cut. (See: just south east of Feature 22).



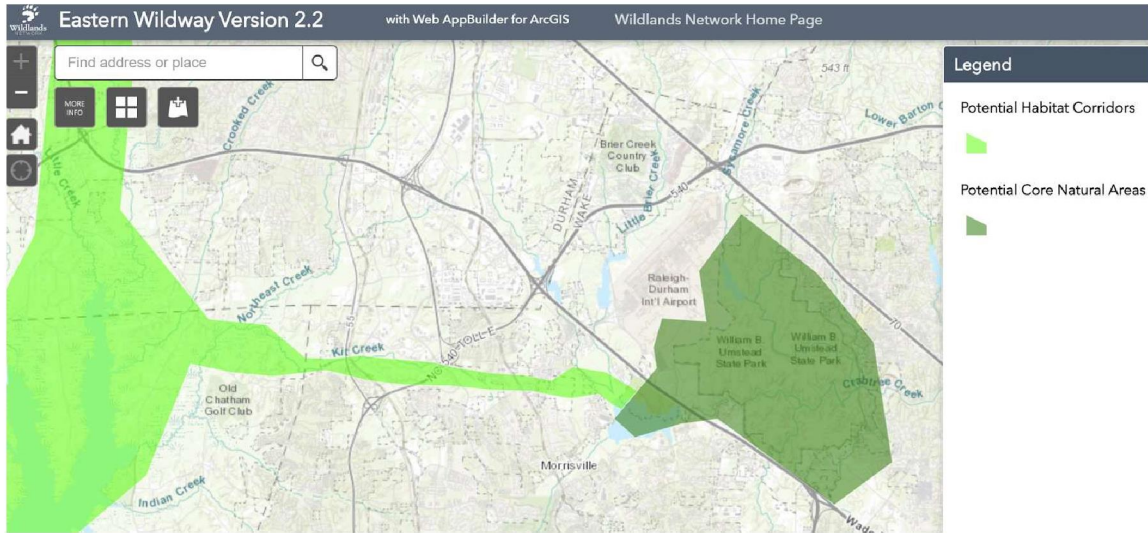
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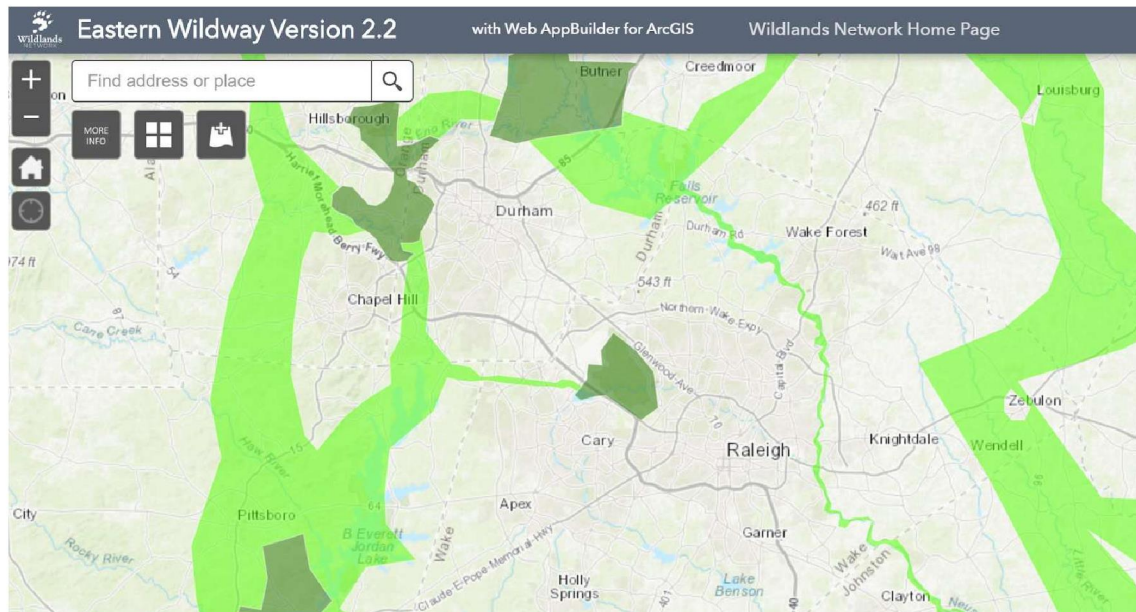
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6. The operation would affect local wildlife inhabiting the area as we are also concerned with how the fence would impact the wildlife corridor. The proposed construction of the fence will still negatively impact and potentially sever the only migratory path for the wildlife connecting the Umstead State Park to Crabtree Park and subsequently the much larger and more complex Eastern Wildway stretching from Quebec to the Everglades.

The corridor can be visualized by the maps below:





The full interactive map can be accessed [here](#). For more information on the Eastern Wildway Map, please refer to the article [here](#).

For these reasons, the Sierra Club Capital Group is greatly concerned for how the proposed fence project would impact the integrity of Umstead State Park and believes that a thorough environmental impact study should be conducted and made available to the public for review prior to any decision regarding the proposed fence. Furthermore, if there continues to be little to no attempt at minimizing or avoiding impact to the Neuse Buffer, we strongly request that the DEQ-Division of Water Resources deny the fence project.

If the studies on water quality and wildlife corridors indicate harm to the state park, we believe preserving the green space in this state park should take priority over the fence project.

Thank you for your dedication in serving our community, and your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Hwa Huang

Group Chair, Executive Committee

Sierra Club Capital Group

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