

Project Narrative:

The Laurel Springs Stream and Wetland Mitigation Site restored, enhanced, or preserved 6,325 linear feet of previously degraded streams, and over 10 acres of wetlands. The mitigation site encompasses 29.19 acres of this property are subject to a permanent conservation easement. The easement is held by the State of North Carolina and protects the restored streams and wetlands from future impacts. Historically ditched sections of Fork Creek and its tributaries have been returned to meandering waterways with pools and riffles to improve local water quality and reduce flooding. The restoration area has been planted with diverse native species sure to benefit wildlife, including wildflowers, streamside shrubs, and 21 species of trees. Over 20,000 trees have planted to date on the property, including oaks, hickories, and persimmons to establish both Montane Alluvial and Acidic Cove hardwood forests which will persist for generations to come. While the forest is in its infancy, it is already providing food and cover to wildlife on the property including deer and turkeys. The terms of the easement restrict any cutting or mowing within the easement as well as motorized vehicles. It may be thought of as a private nature preserve. However, the landowner does retain the exclusive right to quiet enjoyment including activities such as hunting, fishing, and hiking. As a relatively recent restoration project, the easement is currently in a monitoring period wherein tree survival and stream stability are regularly checked and occasional maintenance activities are performed. During this period, extending to 2029, Restoration Systems will visit the easement 6-12 times per year to observe the site. Other activities may include additional tree planting, removal of beaver dams, treatment of invasive vegetation, and even stream repairs if warranted. The landowner bears no responsibility for any of this work other than to permit access. After the monitoring period ends the State of North Carolina will conduct annual visits to the site, primarily to check that the easement boundary is being honored.

Total planting

Cherry birch (<i>Betula lenta</i>)	2600
Eastern hemlock (<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>)	1000
Red oak (<i>Quercus rubra</i>)	1300
White oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>)	1700
White pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)	600
Yellow birch (<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>)	500
Scarlet oak (<i>Quercus coccinea</i>)	1100
Tulip poplar (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>)	2150
River birch (<i>Betula nigra</i>)	1450
Sycamore (<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>)	2100
Silky dogwood (<i>Cornus amomum</i>)	600
Black willow (<i>Salix nigra</i>)	800
Elderberry (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>)	400
Buttonbush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>)	400
Common ninebark (<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>)	300
Arrowwood viburnum (<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>)	800
Bitternut hickory (<i>Carya cordiformis</i>)	800
American hazelnut (<i>Corylus americana</i>)	600
American elm (<i>Ulmus americana</i>)	600
Persimmon (<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>)	600
Red spruce (<i>Picea rubens</i>)	250
TOTAL	20,650