

Hurley Park Newsletter



SUMMER 2005

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Hurley Park Receives Robertson Foundation Grant

Over the years the stream bank close to the pond has been slowly eroding away. A couple of factors account for the stream bank erosion. The most obvious being the rapid and heavy flow of water due to street runoff that travels through the stream during storms. It is hard to believe that a tiny stream like the one in Hurley Park can carry so much water, but travel down to the park during a heavy rain and



you will see the stream turn into a small river. The second factor is the tunneling of muskrats that eventually cause the collapse of the stream bank. We are hoping through the Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation Grant to reduce the erosion along the stream bank, the tunneling of muskrats, and improve the aesthetics of the park.

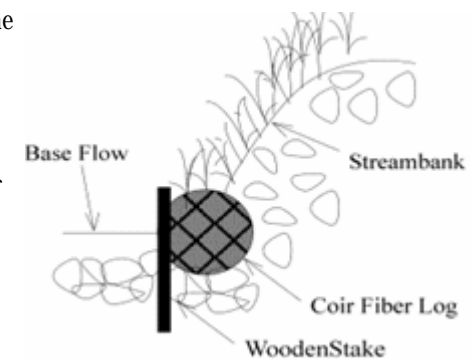
The erosion of the stream bank has been slowed over the years by mowing the stream bank only once a year in late fall, or early winter. The absence of regular mowing has kept the stream bank intact due to the roots anchoring the soil. Rocks have also been added to the stream bank to slow erosion, however the heavy flow of water usually moves the stones out of place.

Eroded bank along stream

A professional was called in to assess the situation and give suggestions on how to reduce erosion. It was suggested that the banks be backfilled with soil and then stabilized by using wire mesh fencing. The wire fencing will aid in reducing the tunneling of muskrats as well. Coconut fiber logs, also called coir fiber rolls, will be placed on top of the mesh and staked with live plant material and/or grasses. The coir fiber rolls (tightly bound cylinders of coconut fibers held together by a coir fiber netting) will become saturated by water and anchor the new plant material, aiding in the increased survival rate of the plant material. They are completely biodegradable, usually degrading within 6 years, leaving the roots of the established plants to secure the bank. Low growing plants, such as grasses and sedges will be used along most of the restored stream bank to maintain the open look in this area.

This project will improve the aesthetics of the park by adding interesting plant material that will decrease the amount of visible sedimentation and the unsightly erosion of the banks.

The stream bank restoration project will take place during the winter when park visitation slows down and there is less risk in damaging the already existing vegetation. The pond will also be dredged in coordination with the stream bank restoration.



Something disturbing has been going on in

Diagram of staked coir fiber roll
www.stormwatercenter.net



519 N. Fulton St.
Salisbury, NC 28114

«MR_MRS» «FNAME» «MI» «LNAME»

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«ADDRESS»

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the park. On several occasions I have admired a beautiful plant while weeding around it or gasped at the beauty of a newly opened flower in the morning only to find it gone the next day. The first time I experienced this plant thievery was at our annual spring celebration this year when the tulips in the Main Entrance Garden were in full bloom.

We take a lot of care in ordering the right color combinations and planting them months before we even start thinking about spring flowers. Then we wait until spring comes around and the first hint of green pokes through the earth. In anticipation of the marvelous show of color that they display we

wait and hope that they will explode with color for all to see at the spring celebration. They performed perfectly again this year and then we got the news that someone on a bicycle was riding away with a basket full of tulips from the park. Mark Martin, the Landscape Operations Manager for the City of Salisbury, noticed the person with the bundle of stolen flowers and told him this was not acceptable, however the damage was done and there was nothing we could do to salvage the bare spot in the garden.

The season rolled on and a beautiful yellow iris bloomed next to the deck at the pond. It was magnificent in its shape and the striking yellow color of its blooms. A



couple days later and it was cut to the ground. A very sad event, but at least the roots were left and hopefully the beautiful blooms will return next year and the person that cut them will not. Other plants have grown legs and walked away and flowers litter the ground after being picked and smelled for a brief walk through the park. All we can do is replace them, or wait for new buds to blossom.

It is unfortunate that this activity occurs and ironic that the people taking the plants and picking the flowers are probably some of the people that admire their beauty the most.

WEDDINGS



If you are planning an outdoor wedding, or other ceremony, consider Hurley Park as a possible site. The Park has hosted many weddings over the years and there are still openings for the 2005 calendar year. Please contact Niki Castor at the Public Services office (704-638-5268) for more information and an application for facility use.

DONATIONS

Donations may be made to the park through The Elizabeth Holmes Hurley Memorial Foundation located at 126 W. Innes Street, Salisbury. Please make checks payable to the Hurley Park Foundation and send to P.O. Box 4354, Salisbury, NC 28145-4354. All donations are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.

Hurley Park Summer Lecture

Susan Rivers is on a mission. This writer and horticulturist is determined to show gardeners in the southern Piedmont that beautiful, sustainable gardens can be achieved despite challenging conditions. And she wants people to learn how easy it is to garden responsibly, creating showcase landscapes without compromising regional soil, air or water quality.

“**Red Clay Gardening**,” the program she will be presenting August 11 at 7:00 p.m. for the Hurley Park Summer Lecture series, is a crash course in the basics of Carolina gardening. Rivers is a certified Master Gardener who lives and gardens at Mountain Island Lake near Charlotte. For this program she draws upon her own experiences developing gardens in Wake and Mecklenburg counties, and shares know-how acquired from a decade spent writing feature sto-

ries about seasoned Tarheel gardeners and designers for Fine Gardening Magazine, Charlotte Magazine, Today's Charlotte Woman and Carolina Gardener Magazine, to which she contributes regularly.

Topics covered in the ninety-minute presentation will include soil-building, plant selection, pest control, and tips on everything from attracting wildlife to growing roses organically.

The presentation will take place in the Salisbury-Rowan Utilities Building at 1 Water Street, Salisbury, NC (formally the Waterworks Visual Arts Center). A plant give-away will take place after the lecture. For directions or information, contact the Hurley Park staff at (704) 638-4459. They may also be reached by email at lbird@salisburync.gov

“Successful gardeners are realists,” says Rivers. “They know that in order for a garden to thrive it must evolve in harmony with climate, environment, and growing cycles. Becoming a red-clay gardener means embracing the benefits of our region’s growing conditions as well as dealing sensibly with its challenges – and that includes the red clay!”



Vitex: Plant of the Season

Vitex, also commonly known as Chaste Tree, has been cultivated for centuries for its medicinal purposes. Historically it was used to lower libido in men. Monks added the dried seeds to their food, much in the same way we use pepper, to reduce sexual desire hence the common names, Chaste Tree and Monk’s Pepper. The scientific name Agnus castus is derived from the Greek words agnos meaning chaste and castus meaning pure. Today, vitex is used as an herbal remedy for menstrual disorders and related hormonal problems. The native range for vitex is from Southeast Africa, to Madagascar, to Eastern and Southeastern Asia. It is hardy in zones 7-9, but can be grown in colder climates as a herbaceous perennial if cut to within 6-12 inches of the ground in the winter. Vitex prefers hot sunny locations with well drained soil. If grown in warmer climates it can get up to 20 feet tall with a spread as wide as it is tall. It is a deciduous plant with grayish green aromatic foliage. When in flower, it is breathtaking with spikes of lavender to purple flowers that attract bees and hummingbirds. Vitex begins blooming in July and can continue to bloom sporadically into early fall. The flowers make good cut and dried flowers. Vitex makes a lovely addition to any garden that can accommodate its size and love of sun.

