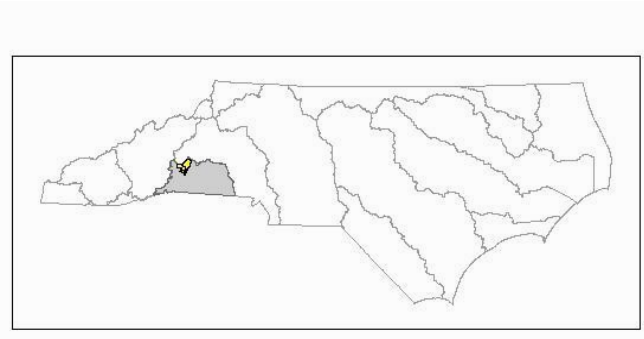
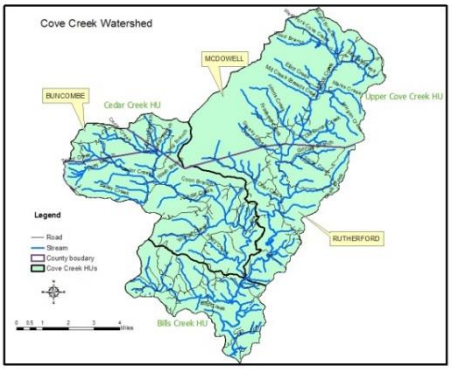
Environmental Quality

COVE CREEK LOCAL WATERSHED PLAN
FACT SHEET

River Basin: **Cataloging Unit:** **14-digit Hydrologic Units:** **Counties:**	Broad 03050105 03050105040040, 03050105040050, 03050105040060 McDowell & Rutherford
Watershed Area	80 square miles
Participants:	Rutherford & McDowell Co. NRCS and SWCD
Contractor Hired for Watershed Assessment	Earth Tech, Inc.





Project Overview

The Cove Creek watershed is located in a rural area of McDowell and Rutherford Counties. In 2006, Earth Tech was hired to develop a fast-track watershed characterization and restoration strategy for the Cove Creek watershed. This abbreviated planning effort involved GIS analysis of land use, buffer integrity, and recent aerial photographs; field efforts were limited to assessment of channel and in-stream habitat integrity at potential restoration sites. Stakeholder involvement involved several meetings with local Natural Resource Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation District technical staff.

The majority of the watershed is forested, and headwater streams are in relatively good condition. Most of the lower gradient bottomlands, through which Cove Creek and some of its tributaries run, are used for pasture, hay, and homes. Cove Creek itself suffers from severe bank erosion; in many areas, its channel is incised and lacks a woody buffer. Primary stressors for the watershed are stream incision of Cove Creek, inadequate riparian buffers, sedimentation, stream bank erosion, livestock access, and possible nutrient enrichment. The greatest threat to stream integrity is development and consequent increases in sedimentation, nutrients, and stormwater.

This area is attractive to second home and retirement communities; land prices have skyrocketed, and some larger forested tracts have recently been sold.

A plan was developed to identify stream restoration projects with willing landowners and to name strategies to improve ecological function in July 2007. Management strategies needed to restore and protect stream health include stream and wetland restoration, buffer planting, agriculture, forestry, and stormwater best management practices, and education. The final plan identified 14 stream restoration projects that fit the minimum requirements of EEP (now the Division of Mitigation Services, DMS).

Project Documents

Cove Creek Watershed Management Plan
Cove Creek Project Atlas
Cove Creek Summary of Findings and Recommendations