

J.E.L. Stormwater Wetland & Community Park

Located in the Hewletts Creek Watershed in Wilmington, North Carolina

Project Summary

New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington partnered to secure funding from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund to acquire 17-acres of land and construct an 11-acre stormwater wetland. This wetland diverts two major outfalls and treats drainage from approximately 590 acres or 10% of the Hewletts Creek Watershed. After wetland construction, the City installed a passive park on the same site.

Stormwater Wetland

In 2005, New Hanover County acquired 17 acres of land formerly known as the “Dobo property” with funding provided by the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). The goal of the land acquisition was to improve water quality in Hewletts Creek by partnering with the City of Wilmington to construct a stormwater wetland on the property. Following the acquisition of the property and in order to facilitate construction of the stormwater project, New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington agreed on a long term lease for the property. The lease provided for the city’s construction and maintenance of the wetland as well as park improvements.

Through additional CWMTF grant funding and City and County funding totaling \$2.9 million dollars, the City's Stormwater Services Division installed the 12-acre stormwater wetland beginning in 2006. The project diverted runoff from two major outfalls bordering the property into the wetland in order to remove pollutants before being discharged back into the headwaters of Hewletts Creek. Completed in 2007, the wetland treats a drainage area of approximately 590 acres or 10% of the Hewletts Creek Watershed. It also serves as critical habitat for native and migratory birds, animals, and plants and is the largest constructed stormwater wetland in the area.

Park Development

After the stormwater project was completed, the City began park development at the site in the spring of 2008 and was completed in January 2009. The cost of the project was \$688,000. Amenities of the 17 acre park include:

- ½ mile (10 foot wide) multi-use path
- Restrooms and picnic shelter
- Playground and open play area
- Educational/interpretive signage
- An existing building was left on the site that may be utilized as an education center and space for public rentals as additional funding become available.

The park is named for named for former Mayor and community activist James E. L. Wade. He served on the Wilmington City Council from 1945 – 1963. A scholarship is named in his honor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington for political science and history majors.

Project Partners

City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund

