

# UNC Chapel Hill— Environmental Finance Center Southeastern Regional Water Quality Assistance



**Wilson Park stream restoration project under construction in Lenoir, NC.**



**The confluence of Stekoa Creek and Chattooga River, showing the high sediment load in the water.**



**A strategic planning meeting was held to discuss improving water quality in Stekoa Creek in the City of Clayton, GA.**

## Targeted Watersheds Capacity Building Grant

The Southeastern Regional Water Quality Assistance Network (SERWQAN) is a coordinated partnership of the Environmental Finance Center at Chapel Hill, NC, Southeast Watershed Forum, North Carolina State University's Stormwater Engineering Group and the Stream Restoration Institute, along with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The partners are nationally recognized in their fields and have extensive experience in providing assistance to organizations and communities.

### Watershed Capacity Building Efforts

Water quality is linked to the rapidly developing southeastern United States. Four of the top ten fastest growing counties in the nation are in the metro-Atlanta area. Rapid growth is decreasing water quality through land use practices that increase stormwater runoff and contribute to erosion and siltation. In Appalachia, water quality impairments are a result of decades of resource extraction. At the 2006 Southeast Watershed Roundtable, community representatives and watershed advocates consistently reported a need for assistance in protecting, managing and restoring water resources. Stakeholders also noted that better integration of land use, watersheds and infrastructure planning is critical to the protection of natural water supplies in the Southeast.

SERWQAN represents a network of organizations that will be working to help protect, maintain and restore water quality in the southeastern United States, including southern Appalachia. The Network competitively selected nine communities across the southeast to provide intensive services. The local government and organizations from each selected community will



commit time and resources to their projects, and the Network will provide practical tools (such as model ordinances and public process facilitation) and equip the groups with sustainable finance mechanisms to support watershed protection efforts. The network partners will provide this assistance by sponsoring a series of planning sessions, regional seminars, skill-building workshops, demonstration projects, financial policy analysis, follow-up assistance and publications. Expected results from the direct assistance work include upgraded land use practices to meet water quality regulations and incentives for wetlands/source water protection practices in the communities participating in the program. As the nine communities complete their projects, the Environmental Finance Center will develop case studies and identify best practices that can be applied in other communities.

**For more information:**

[www.serwqan.org](http://www.serwqan.org)

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**EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.**

**For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:  
<http://www.epa.gov/twg>**

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