Orange Water and Sewer Authority

A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.

NEWS RELEASE **February 12, 2010**

OWASA INVITES CITIZENS TO A COMMUNITY MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY MANAGEMENT INCLUDING A DRAFT PLAN FOR OWASA'S CANE CREEK MITIGATION LAND NEAR BUCKHORN ROAD

OWASA invites interested citizens to participate in a Community Meeting on Wednesday night, February 24th about sustainable management of OWASA's forest lands, including a draft plan for 490 acres of OWASA land near Buckhorn Road north of the Cane Creek Reservoir.

The Community Meeting on February 24th will be held at 7 PM in the Maple View Agricultural Center at 3501 Dairyland Road in southwestern Orange County. (A map and directions are below.) A forestry consultant to OWASA and staff from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) will make presentations, and OWASA will receive comments and questions from citizens.

The 490 acres which OWASA owns near Buckhorn Road is known as the Cane Creek Wildlife Mitigation tract, because it was acquired to offset the loss of habitat due to construction of the Cane Creek Reservoir. The mitigation tract is also a State game land managed by the WRC in accord with OWASA's Federal permit for the Cane Creek Reservoir.

The objectives of OWASA's forestry stewardship efforts are to protect long-term drinking water quality and watershed health by improving the health and diversity of OWASA's forest lands, while improving the quality and diversity of wildlife habitat. Since trees take in carbon dioxide from the air and can play an important role in mitigating the greenhouse gas effect, OWASA also expects that its forestry management will result in a net increase in the carbon stored in its forests.

OWASA has retained an expert consulting forester, True North Forest Management Services, to help prepare an overall plan for the utility's forest lands, and a draft should be ready around the end of June, 2010. True North has extensive experience and expertise in developing sustainable forest management plans. True North also works closely with the NC Division of Forest Resources (DFR), the WRC, and other stakeholders in all phases of its work.

As a first step in the forest stewardship effort, the WRC staff developed a Forest Management Plan for the Cane Creek Wildlife Mitigation tract. WRC staff developed the plan to ensure a healthy and diverse forest and wildlife habitat.

True North has prepared a draft active forest management plan that will implement the WRC's recommendations for the Cane Creek Mitigation tract. The WRC staff has confirmed their full support for True North's work on this important undertaking.

Under the draft plan:

- Water quality including erosion control and stream protection is OWASA's highest priority.

- Individual trees and forested areas of marginal value, less desirable species (such as Virginia Pines), overly mature, diseased and insect-infested trees would be removed so that higher quality trees will be able to spread out as they grow, have better access to sunlight, water, nutrients, etc.

- In selected areas, trees would be thinned out to enhance the growth of desired species including tall-growing trees and "understory" vegetation that will provide cover and food for wildlife.

- To recondition the soil and enhance the environment for new tree growth, some areas would be burned at ground level in closely controlled, low intensity conditions. The low intensity burns would replicate the effects of natural forest fires and are important in natural regeneration of woodlands.

On January 14th, the OWASA Board of Directors authorized a public information/discussion process regarding the long-term forest stewardship plans and True North's and the WRC's recommendations for active management of the Cane Creek Mitigation tract to ensure that the public is aware of and has the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.

After considering the public comments at a later date, the OWASA Board of Directors will consider finalizing the forest management plan for the Cane Creek Mitigation tract and authorizing staff and OWASA's consultant to implement the plan. OWASA staff believes the experience in this effort will help inform plans and decisions for sustainable management of its other forest lands.

The public is encouraged to contact Pat Davis, OWASA's Sustainability Manager, at 537-4210 or pdavis@owasa.org at any time, and to send comments and questions to OWASA by letter, e-mail or fax by March 12th. (Please see the additional contact information below.)

For more information:

Pat Davis, Sustainability Manager, 537-4210 or pdavis@owasa.org

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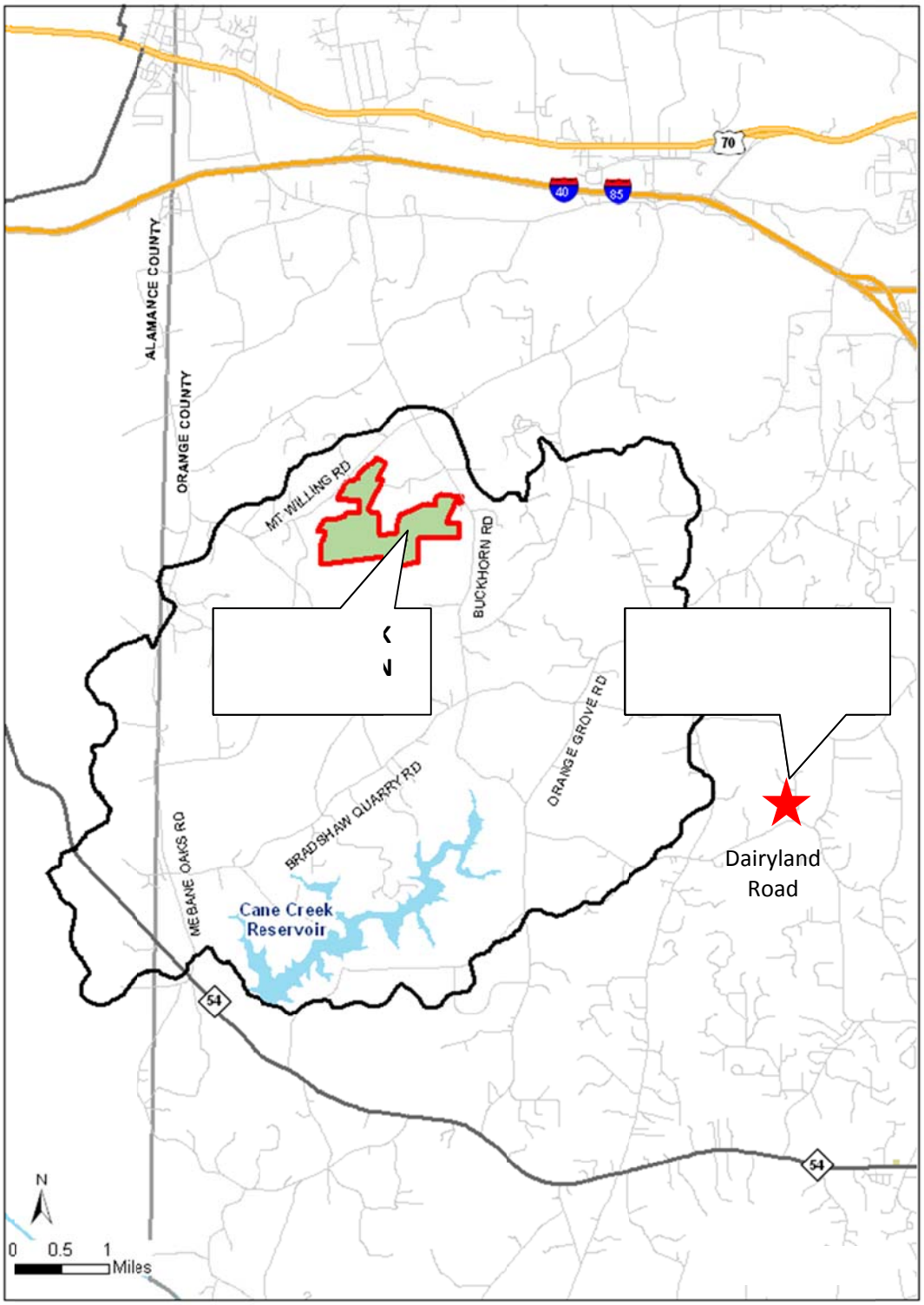
(Please see the map and directions below.)

GENERAL VICINITY MAP OF THE CANE CREEK MITIGATION TRACT AND MAPLE VIEW AGRICULTURAL CENTER



Directions to Maple View Agricultural Center (3501 Dairyland Road):

From south Chapel Hill and Carrboro

Take Highway 54 Bypass West. Just past Carrboro Plaza, turn right at the stop light onto Old Fayetteville Road. At the first stop light, continue straight onto Old Highway 86. In approximately 1

mile turn left at stop light onto Dairyland Road. The entrance to Maple View Agricultural Center is a little over 4 miles on the right, approximately one half mile past the Maple View Farm Country Store.

From north Chapel Hill
Follow Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd (aka Historic Airport Road / NC Highway 86) to the intersection with Homestead Road (near Orange United Methodist Church). Turn west on Homestead Road and follow to the intersection of Homestead Road and Old Highway 86 at Calvander. Go straight through the intersection. The road becomes Dairyland Road. The entrance to Maple View Agricultural Center is a little over 4 miles on the right, approximately one half mile past the Maple View Farm Country Store.

From Hillsborough
Take Old Highway 86 toward Carrboro and Chapel Hill. Go under I-85 and I-40. At the next crossroads, turn right onto Arthur Minnis Road. Just before the road turns to gravel, turn left onto Rocky Ridge Road. Follow for less than 1 mile. At the first stop sign, turn right onto Dairyland Road. Maple View Agricultural Center is approximately one half mile on the right.