

# OWASA may open property for hunting

BY SPENCER GIPPLE  
STAFF WRITER

For the first time in the organization's history, the Orange Water and Sewer Authority is moving closer to allowing hunting on some of its land.

OWASA and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will hold a public hearing March 8 to give county residents a chance to voice their opinions about permitting hunting on a 500-acre site near the Cane Creek watershed between Martin and Mount Willing roads in western Orange County.

Ed Holland, OWASA planning director, said the group bought the land in the early 1980s to recover from the loss of wildlife habitats after building the Cane Creek Reservoir.

"When we received a permit to build the reservoir, there were certain requirements we had to meet," he said. "About two years ago, it was brought to our attention that we weren't meeting one of the provisions of the permit."

That provision, Holland said, was one that required OWASA to allow the public to hunt on the reservoir's land.

But because OWASA didn't want to allow hunting near the reservoir, it worked with the commission to propose that hunting be allowed on the mitigation property, he said.

"We can't have bullets flying around the reservoir," said Mark Marcoplos, OWASA board of directors chairman. "That's just not good."

He added that the other reason for opening the mitigation land for hunting was that a lot of illegal hunting already takes place on the property.

"Wildlife areas are shrinking," Marcoplos said. "And a lot of people over the years have gotten used to hunting on these lands."

He said that once the OWASA board approves the limited hunting proposal sometime this spring,

*"A lot of people over the years have gotten used to hunting on these lands."*

MARK MARCOPLOS, OWASA

he hopes that the commission will put a stop to illegal hunting.

"The Wildlife Resource Commission will be able to monitor the land and enforce hunting regulations," Marcoplos said. "Then if someone goes out there and tries to hunt without a license, they can arrest them."

There are a number of provisions in the proposal that the OWASA board must approve before it allows hunting on the land.

Some of the provisions, he said, include only allowing the hunting of deer with a bow during most of the hunting season — from September to November. For a short period, hunting with muzzle-loading firearms also will be permitted.

Marcoplos presented OWASA's plans to the Orange County Board of Commissioners on Feb. 15 to get feedback and to discuss the possibility of using the mitigation land for passive park uses such as hiking.

Commissioners Vice Chairman Barry Jacobs said he isn't convinced that the land should be used solely for hunting.

"I don't know that there's that big of a need for hunting," he said. "It just doesn't seem like there have been a lot of people clamoring for new places to hunt."

But Jacobs added that he is not against using the land for hunting, as long as OWASA follows legal standards such as not permitting weapons within 1,000 feet of a school.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

# Schools cultivate communication

BY KATHRYN REED  
STAFF WRITER

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools soon will be ready to join Orange County Schools and the growing number of districts across the state in improving communication with parents and faculty.

The district will conduct a test run today of Connect-ED, its new centralized messaging system, to make sure that students' contact numbers are updated and that parents are aware of the new system.

Connect-ED, which has been in place in county schools since early December, allows administrators to contact all parents in the district with emergency messages or announcements within minutes — with a single phone call.

Kim Hoke, spokeswoman for city schools, said the system can call up to six contact numbers

for each student, and it also will include messages in Spanish.

She said the system will be an improvement from the district's reliance on the news media and its district Web site and phone line to spread announcements.

"This will add one more direct link to parents," Hoke said. "It's more efficient, more direct, more timely."

County schools officials say the system already has received positive feedback from parents.

Ryan Miller, instructional technology coordinator for county schools, said Superintendent Shirley Carraway was able to send a message to more than 18,000 people in about an hour when the district had an early dismissal for snow earlier this year.

He added that the system — along with The Loop, the district-

wide e-mail list — is part of the county's overall plan to increase communication with parents.

"This was just one more layer we were able to add on," he said.

Jim Causby, executive director of the N.C. Association of School Administrators, said the use of systems like Connect-ED is a growing trend among school systems across the state.

More than 40 districts in the state are using similar types of communication systems, he said.

The majority of these districts are using Connect-ED.

"The biggest thing is to be able to have the best communication possible," Causby said.

He said messaging systems are especially important in areas experiencing rapid population growth, where many parents new to the area do not have relatives nearby

to take care of their children in the case of last-minute closings or delays.

An increase in parent involvement also has been evident in many districts using such messaging systems, with more parents attending meetings and school events, he said.

"School systems say the results have been amazing," Causby said.

Raymond Reitz, chief technology officer for city schools, said systems like Connect-ED are essential for schools to have success.

"I believe it's a requirement in this day and age to provide reliable and easy access for communication," Reitz said.

"Parents and the community expect that."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

# Poll: Social Security lacks N.C. support

BY DERRICK LANKFORD  
STAFF WRITER

Many North Carolina residents are not in line with President Bush's proposed Social Security reforms, a new Elon University poll shows.

The statewide telephone poll, administered to 544 adults chosen at random, states that 46 percent of respondents "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove" of Bush's proposed changes to Social Security.

This information might come as a surprise, given the fact that Bush carried the state by a comfortable 12-point margin last November.

But Ferrel Guillory, director of UNC's Program in Southern Politics, Media and Public Life, said Bush owes his election victory to his strength as a leader after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, not the popularity of his Social Security policy.

He added that the war in Iraq and the economy overshadowed Social Security as the main issues during the election.

"This poll is telling us that Bush really has a lot of work to do to sell his ideas on Social Security to the public," said Tim Vercellotti, director of the poll and a professor of political science at Elon.

He added that North

Carolinians, while tending to side with Republicans on national issues, agree with the majority of the country on how the president has handled Social Security.

But the state's Republican senators, Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr, have voiced support for the president's proposals in the past.

"These numbers will most likely not cause Burr or Dole to change their support of the president," Vercellotti said.

Doug Heye, Burr's spokesman, said the senator's position comes from a political conviction rather than public opinion.

"(Burr) doesn't look to polls at all to guide his policy decisions," Heye said. "People don't elect people that are going to look at polls to make their decisions. That's not leadership."

Burr and Dole's Social Security views line up with 31 percent of the state, according to the Elon poll.

Vercellotti added that Bush decided to push his widely debated plan for Social Security well before the midterm election in 2006 — an election that will determine who holds a number of seats in both chambers of the U.S. Congress.

"If Congress believes these changes cannot be made or there is not enough popular support to

get his intended changes through, then the effects of the political fallout on public support for the president will have time to recover," Vercellotti said.

"Bush would not have that luxury if he pushed these issues a year from now."

In his visit to Raleigh last week, President Bush reinforced his belief that Social Security is in a state of crisis and needs major reform.

"A lot of North Carolina believes

that something needs to be done concerning the issue of Social Security," Guillory said.

"A majority doesn't believe that President Bush's way is necessarily that best way to deal with the matter," he added.

"If he wants to convince them otherwise, he's got a lot of hard work and campaigning ahead of him."

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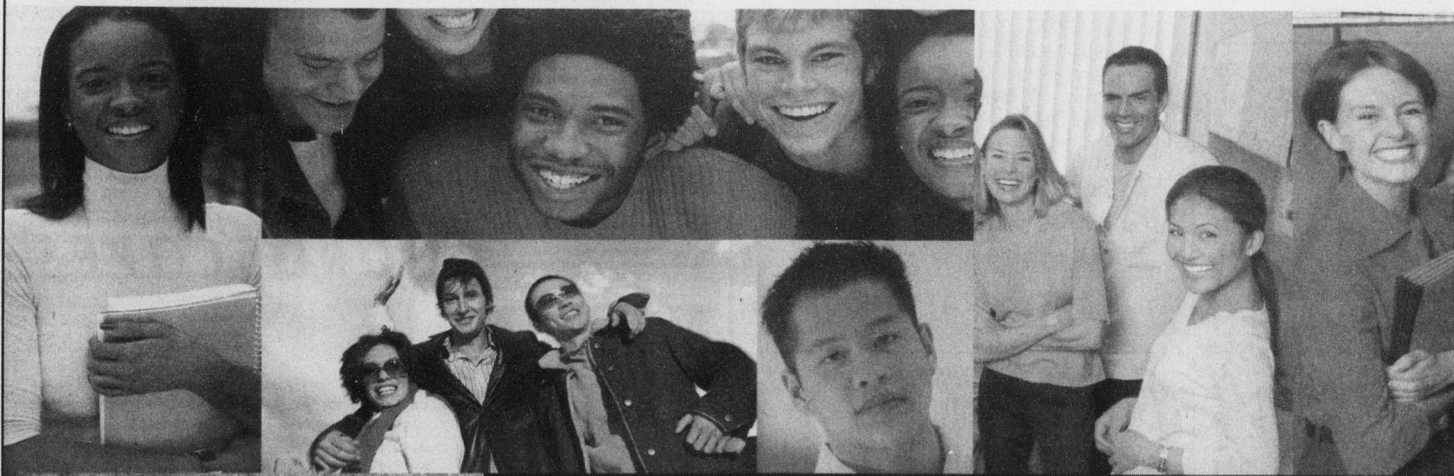
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