CCCG: An Identity In Flux
How the location of the CCCG has changed its mission and value.

INTRODUCTION
As a small group of amateur geographers and environmental scientists, Political Ecology has pushed us to critique many of the assumptions which had previously shaped our collective and individual understandings of our environments, be they natural or constructed, local or global. We have been encouraged to deconstruct the categories we have traditionally assigned to various environments, departing from solely the physical environment and examining that of the philosophical, the institutional, the cultural, and, especially, the political.

The garden has presented us with an interesting site for fieldwork, as it’s meaning and function are constituted by both its locality and familiarity as well by those aspects of the garden which are foreign, complex, and detached from us.

RESEARCH QUESTION
Upon our first visit to the garden, we were struck by information we received regarding the garden’s insecure land tenure. The garden will face possible relocation in five to six years when the university decides whether or not it will develop the garden’s current property. We decided to frame our case study around this topic.

How and to what extent does the discourse regarding garden location reflect the relationships that constitute the garden?

METHODS
Information was primarily gathered as semi-structured interviews with Garden affiliates representing different interests in the garden location. The themes of these conversations explored primary garden goals, value or limitations of the current site, and the future plans for the garden.

Those spoken with included: the CCCG Director (Claire Lorch), the Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives (Dr. Carol P. Tresolini), and a student on the Facilities Working Group (Jason Dunn). A past capstone and Facilities Working Group meeting notes were also consulted.

The gathered information was analyzed under the guide of several of the readings from the course that touched on social justice, identity, hunger and other themes associated with the CCCG.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Providing the housekeepers with fresh produce was enumerated by those spoken with and the mission statement as the primary goal of the garden. This approach would appear to be a redistributive approach to issues of poverty and hunger.

Currently, decisions about the garden are limited by the uncertainty of the permanence of the gardens location and the size of the land parcel the garden is on. This calls attention to the increase in production and thus redistribution by moving to a larger, more permanent spot such as Carolina North.

Despite this, the importance of having a garden location easily accessible from campus was identified by all informants as critical to the CCCG’s success Reasons enumerated for this include reliance on student labor and importance of Education, and maintaining the CCCG’s identity as a ‘community garden’.

There is an acknowledgement of the tension surrounding the changing value of the garden beyond providing produce. The number of courses and projects at the Garden site has added value to the garden as well as its location to the administration and students that was not initially expected.

CONCLUSIONS

A political ecology approach enabled our group to critically evaluate how the enumerated goals of the garden contradict the value each actor saw in the garden. The environment the CCCG creates for students, neighborhood members, and Professors for education and community has created the value placed upon it by these actors. In order for this value to be continued, these actors generally agree that a location in close proximity to campus is necessary, despite how this contradicts the CCCG mission.

It is in this key conclusion, that we have been able to use political ecology to show how the current location of the CCCG created the value placed upon it and that in order to maintain the newfound values and the current location, they should be enumerated with the value placed upon them.

REFERENCES
Dunn, Jason. “CCCG: From the Student Perspective.” E-mail interview. 28 Nov. 2012.